THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE:



BY N. JORGA

ALDINE HOUSE
J. M. DENT & CO

1907 * 29 & 30 BEDFORD STREET, LONDON

www.dacoromanica.ro

BIBLIOTECA
AȘEZĂMÂNTULUI CULTURAL



„NICOLAE BĂLCESCU"

www.dacoromanica.ro

TEMPLE PRIMERS

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

by

N. JORGA

Translated from the French by

ALLEN H. POWLES, M.A.

www.dacoromanica.ro

All rights reserved

www.dacoromanica.ro

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This new history of Byzantium, notwithstanding its slender proportions, has been compiled from the original sources. Second-hand materials have only been used to compare the results obtained by the author with those which his predecessors have reached.

The aim in view has not been to present one more systematic chronology of Byzantine history, considered as a succession of tragic anecdotes standing out against a permanent background. I have followed the development of Byzantine life in all its length and breadth and wealth, and I have tried to give a series of pictures rather than the customary dry narrative.

It may be found possibly that I have given insufficient information on the Slav and Italian neighbours and subjects of the empire. I have thought it my duty to adopt the point of view of the Byzantines themselves and to assign to each nation the place it occupied in the minds of the politicians and thoughtful men of Byzantium. This has been done in such a way as not to prejudicate the explanation of the Byzantine transformations.

Much less use than usual has been made of the Oriental sources. These are for the most part late, and inaccuracy is the least of their defects. It is clear that our way of looking

www.dacoromanica.ro

at and appreciating events is much more that of the Byzantines than of the Arabs. In the case of these latter it is always necessary to adopt a liberal interpretation, to allow for a rhetoric foreign to our notions, and to correct not merely the explanation, but also the feelings which initiated it. We perpetually come across a superficial civilisation and a completely different race.

www.dacoromanica.ro

CONTENTS

BOOK I

THE ROMAN EMPIRE OF THE GREEK-SPEAKING EAST

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	The Era of the Attempts at Recuperation (400-565)	1
II.	The Dissolution of the Work of Justinian (565-610)	38
III.	New Attempt at Restoration by Heraclius (610-649)	50
IV.	Dismemberment of the Old Empire by the Arabs (649-700)	54

BOOK II

THE ORTHODOX GREEK EMPIRE OF ASIA MINOR AND THRACE

I.	Formation of the "Middle Empire"	59
II.	The "Isaurian" Emperors and the Dispute about the Sacred Images (717-867)	64
III.	Pacification of the Religious Disputes—Reconciliation with the Baptised Bulgars (787-867 A.D.)	75

BOOK III

THE NEW WORK OF BYZANTINE REVIVAL IN THE TENTH, ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH CENTURIES

I.	Early History of the Macedonian Dynasty down to the Great Wars of Basil II. (867-976)—Battles against the Arabs and Bulgars for the Safety of the Frontiers and Coasts—Byzantium Recovers the Mastery at Sea	85
II.	The Forces of the Restored Empire	96
III.	The Crusades in Asia during the Tenth Century, and the Conquest of Eastern Bulgaria	105
IV	The Apogee of the New Empire under Basil II. (976-1025)	112
V.	The Basilian Empire down to the Age of the Comneni	119
VI.	The New Turkish Danger	126

www.dacoromanica.ro

BOOK IV

THE GROWTH OF THE LATIN ELEMENT

CHAP.		PAGE
I	Condition of the Empire at the end of the Eleventh Century	131
II.	Byzantium, Rome and the Normans	140
III.	The Crusaders at Constantinople	144
IV.	The Emperor Manuel Comnenus, a Brilliant Eastern Knight (1143-1180)	149
V.	Taking of Constantinople by the Latins—The New Empire of the Latins at Constantinople (1204-1261)	155
VI.	The Empire of Nicea, and the Greek Revenge	179

BOOK V

THE EXPANSION OF THE TURKS, AND THE END OF THE RESTORED GREEK EMPIRE (1261-1453)

I.	The First Wars of the Paleologi	185
II.	Relations with the West	189
III.	New Customs in reconquered Byzantium	192
IV.	First Conflicts with the Turks	194
V.	Dynastic Disputes in the Fourteenth Century	201
VI.	The Prologue to the Turkish Conquest—Advent of the Osmanlis in Europe	208
VII.	Last Days of Constantinople (1400-1453)	214
	EPILOGUE	225
	BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CRITICISM	228
	CHRONOLOGY OF THE EMPERORS OF CONSTANTINOPLE	231
	INDEX	233

www.dacoromanica.ro

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

BOOK I

The Roman Empire of the Greek-Speaking East

CHAPTER I

THE ERA OF THE ATTEMPTS AT RECUPERATION (400-565)

A. *General Observations: The Idea of the Empire.*

(*a*) *Development of the Empire of the West.* — The Roman Empire was gradually evolved from the city of Rome. This empire was governed by the military dictator, whose *imperium* was henceforth destined to be permanent in view of the continual menace of the barbarians, and was divided into two *provinces*, which bore in the East and the West the title of empires, but in such a way that the ideal unity of the indivisible *imperium* was not impaired. The empire as a concrete whole was merely divided, provisionally at first, precisely as the imperial system itself had been provisional to begin with. The imperial West—it is advisable to employ this term rather than that of Western Empire, which is not contemporary and does not connote the same idea—became first the prey of the Germans, then the ideal appanage of the Popes, and finally the prize of the Roman Emperors of Germanic stock, whose line is headed by Charlemagne and resumed by Otto I. In this western half of the ancient civilised world no one city ever played a decisive part; Rome, plundered, humbled and sacked, fallen once for all from her temporal position, had no heir to her greatness. The West, it is true, preserved to some extent

www.dacoromanica.ro

the Roman laws and the tradition of the Latin language in the State, the Church and the intellectual life. Numerous functions and institutions, much of the style of dress, the elements of art, court ceremonial and scholastic methods, all came from ancient Rome, either directly or through the medium of Christianity.

But, after all, these are but remains, floating spars, lifeless forms, indecipherable fragments. The Germanic influx, whose importance it is useless to dispute, effected a complete transformation and revolution. The harmony, the delicate network and perfect system of the civilisation of ancient Rome were destroyed. There is no general continuity between the empire of Theodosius and that of the Carolingians and Ottonians.

Immediately after the year 1000 national civilisations finally began to dawn. They tried to snap the chains which bound them to an empire subservient to the Germanic nationality only; each people had now perfected a language of its own which continually encroached on the claims of Latin.

From this side, therefore, the new age presents more rapid and characteristic proofs of its existence.

(*b*) *Characteristics of the Development of the Empire of the East.*—The life of the Roman East is sharply marked off from that which we have just sketched. Barbarism slowly trickled in, and its stream never attained the size which it had long reached in the West. The tide of Germans flowed toward the West by the great channels of the imperial roads constructed for the protecting legions. The Slavs did not dare to dream of Byzantium; in the provinces which they occupied, they willingly resigned themselves to a method which made them allies, clients and mercenaries of the empire. Down to the arrival of the Bulgars and their assimilation with the inhabitants of conquered Thrace, we shall not find a barbarian competitor for the throne of Marcian and Justinian.

We must bear in mind also that the greater number of provinces, including the largest, most populated and most wealthy, were in Asia and Africa, where, notwithstanding the Persians, they had no invasion to fear until the Arabs of

www.dacoromanica.ro

the seventh century. The East therefore enjoyed two centuries of comparative respite which the emperors turned to their advantage. Here we find no chaos or interruption, no sack of the capital by the barbarians. The Roman life develops from age to age. The barbarians did not suppress the empire as Odoacer, nor replace it as Theodoric, who were both "kings" in the place of the fallen Cæsars; they did not propose to revive the tradition of the empire on their own account after a lapse of four hundred years. Their chiefs attained the imperial dignity and even founded dynasties, but only after having abandoned their people and its customs, after having made themselves "Romans" and given proof of a somewhat suitable assimilation; for then "Isaurian," "Thracian," "Macedonian," were but nicknames, like those of the Turkish Grand Viziers, which recalled the province where they were born amid the Christians, or a trade which they plied at the threshold of their career. New Rome, therefore, remained inviolate.

To what was this fact due? Simply and solely to the master-stroke of Constantine the Great when he turned Byzantium into his "City of Constantine," his Κωνσταντινού-πόλις, his New Rome. This capital had been completed in the two hundred years from Constantine to Theodosius. It was a Rome, the New Rome, the Rome of the present and of the future, but a Greek Rome. Her inhabitants, those of the towns, the cities and neighbouring villages, of all the adjacent parts of Thrace, of all Asia Minor, on which side her suburbs overflowed on the opposite coast and outside the walls—these inhabitants, who had had nothing to do with the last days of Hellas and the political ideas of the Hellenes, this mixture of Thracians and Greeks, regarded themselves as Romans. But they used the Greek word Ῥωμαῖοι; they even came to call their Greek, their *Romaic*, a Roman language.

Rome had once had her Italic customs, superstitions and manners, on which the empire also was founded. All this had now to be *translated into Greek*, because the Roman world was the emperor, and the emperor was the sacred

www.dacoromanica.ro

circle of New Rome. This work of adaptation was carried on for three hundred years at least, if it is admitted that Justinian was not yet a Byzantine emperor. The name Byzantine is given to the type of civilisation slightly Roman, conspicuously Greek, and "most Christian" (in the Greek sense also), which was thus produced. The name is appropriate to the result.

The Roman element is well known. Our task is to recognise the second element, the chief factor in the change, and to trace out the resultant process.

B. *Constantinople and its Place in the Empire.*

(*a*) *Ancient Byzantium.*—The ancient historian Polybius had already mentioned the splendid situation of the city of Byzantium to which the people of the Black Sea brought wheat, honey, wax, and costly furs; the Greek cities supplied oil, and the sea itself furnished abundance of fish. Large tracts of arable country surrounded ancient Byzantium. It was a sort of wedge between Thrace, to which it hardly belonged, Asia Minor and Pontus. The master of Constantinople was naturally the guardian of the islands of the Archipelago, which connect the coast of Thrace with those of Asia and of Hellas, and with the distant island of Crete, the key of the road which leads to the continent of Africa. It was a central position for the Oriental possessions of the Roman Empire and an unrivalled capital from strategic, economic and cultural considerations. Although Diocletian had resided there for a day, Byzantium was almost a cipher when it became Constantinople. Its Greek inhabitants, those first and true Byzantines, blended with the masses of the new Constantinopolitans. Colonists came from every country of the East. Among many Greeks, from Europe and Asia, there were representatives of those oversea tribes, which had by this time become very mixed, speaking indifferently Greek or their native dialect, and had made little advance in civilisation. They were called after the name of their native province, Cappadocians, Isaurians,

www.dacoromanica.ro

Pisidians, Lycaonians and so forth. There were increasing numbers also of Armenians, the "Persarmenians," coming from that part of Armenia which was subject to the Persians. Doubtless there were many Jews, for that nation, which still retained military qualities, formed a considerable part of the population of the large towns of that epoch, including Rome and Naples, which the Jews helped to defend against the "Romans" of the Emperor Justinian.

(*b*) *The Imperial Palace.*—Beyond the city properly so-called, towering above it and commanding it, lay the imperial city, separated from the rest and grown to an immense size in accordance with the ancient Oriental customs. The sacred majesty of the Emperor, visible only during the great political, ecclesiastical or military feasts and ceremonies, in the midst of spears, shields and bows, flags surmounted by the eagle and the cross, and standards bearing the portraits of the saints, was guarded in his palace, magnificent with marble, gold and ivory, like a saint in his shrine. By his side was the empress, his wife, his partner in every affair, who exercised great public authority and great secret influence, adopting her own policy and making her own plans, and crowned with the same saint-like aureole as her sacred spouse. The relations of the imperial pair were not unfrequently admitted to the honours of the imperial roof.

(*c*) *The Court.*—Round these "lords by the grace of God," whom they represented, revolved incessantly a world of high officials, of soldiers, favourites and intriguers. Every day could be seen the titular consuls, the officers still called quæstors, the members of a senate which only possessed judicial functions, and some other rather ridiculous relics of the republican past, which survived there less than at Rome, from the soil of which it had originally sprung. Any influence these dignitaries might have was personal because they were rich, and had hundreds and thousands of *companions* in the German fashion, trusty followers, who, instead of styling themselves *leads*, as in the camps and courts of the barbarian kings and dukes, assumed the Hellenic titles of *doryphori* or

www.dacoromanica.ro

lance-bearers, and of *hypaspistae* or shield-bearers.[1] But it was not as magistrates that they asserted their position, but as ἄρχοντες, as gentlemen and barons in the new style. There were still a large number of "ancient Romans" of Italian or Balkan stock among them.

(*d*) *The Army.*—The soldiers and the officers of the *scholæ*, the Eastern guard of the emperor, the troops which guarded the city, the leaders of the army, *magistri*, commanders of the East, of Constantinople, of the guard, are comprised in another category. These were Goths, Gepidi, Lombards, coming from the Pannonian and Servian Danube, Massagetæ, that is to say, Coutrigourian or Outrigourian Huns, more rarely Avars, Bulgars and Slavs; often on the contrary there were Armenians, more or less moulded on the customs of Byzantium, Colchians or Lazes from the mountains of Asia Minor, and those other Asiatics whose name has been already mentioned above.

(*e*) *The Guests of Constantinople.*—We must not forget, in the next place, the foreigners who had no functions or commands in the empire. Justinian kept at his court a Persian who pretended to be Kobad, heir to the crown of his country. There were the ambassadors, as strictly watched as prisoners, who waited months for the result of their proposals; men from the steppes of Asia, unable to read or write, who delivered messages which they had learnt by heart; haughty Persian satraps, wearing golden diadems and ornaments of pearls and precious stones (these were treated with the most consideration since their "king" was powerful); the emissaries of Indian princes, who rode into the Circus on elephants to pay a visit to the "Roman people"; Turks from the Altaï, and even the envoy of "Askel, King of the Hermichiones, remotest of barbarian nations near the Ocean." Some days afterwards came the turn of the proud envoys of a Gothic, Gepidian or Lombard king; the representative of the badly-dressed Slavs, with their soft utterance and shifty looks, of the Gallic Franks who scorned to give way to

[1] The doryphori were the officers of the others. *Vide* Procopius, *De bello Persico*, p. 234.

www.dacoromanica.ro

anyone, or of the Anglo-Saxons, who, under the protection of the Frankish king, came from regions which the Byzantine scholars placed near the legendary Thule. Then there were the barbarian princes, attracted to the court of the emperor by promises and rewards, by pensions and those titles of patrician count and consul which the "Roman" diplomatists of the East bestowed as high orders to win and secure the services of the enemy. This was the fortune of Theodoric the Ostrogoth, and his successor Theodatus, gentle disciple of Plato as he was, would gladly have shared it; Amalasuntha, the daughter of Theodoric, had herself thought of living in the midst of the splendours of Constantinople the life of a disillusioned queen, like that which Christine of Sweden passed. Finally from all the invaded provinces where, among the Roman element irreconcilables, outlaws and fugitives existed, there came bishops, as for example Pope Vigilius, Roman nobles and suspected rhetoricians to implore the favour of the emperor and to lay before him their schemes of restoration, conquest or revenge.

A sentence of Procopius pictures to us the aged Justinian, seated in a room of his vast palace and busied late into the night with a meeting of grey-headed bishops in explaining according to his view the "dogmas of the Christians." Head of the Church, president by right of the councils which he could convene, defender of the faith, the Byzantine emperor in the sixth century was not yet assailed by the religious quarrels which always existed at Byzantium, but was informed daily of the affairs of the Church. The members of the clergy also were often near the precincts of the throne.

The two worlds, the Court and the City, met in the armies no doubt, but at Constantinople they met even in the churches and at the games in the Circus.

(*f*) *The Church.*—The pastoral cult of the early times with its admirable simplicity and supreme contempt for ritual, on becoming a free and favoured religion, a State religion, had assumed in the East the Byzantine garb. A learned music resounded under the vaulted roof of the gilded

www.dacoromanica.ro

church, built according to the rules of a new art. Countless columns rose tier upon tier, with capitals of intricate ornamentation; there were long lines of large rounded windows, niches, apses, recesses, a medley of arches and ponderous cupolas; a skilful harmony of variegated marbles adorned the walls and the gallery of the *ambôn;* there were pictures on wood, the *icons*, with aureoles of gilded plaster, and mosaics glittered on the walls; hundreds of candles and of gold and silver lamps were alight, while the officiating clergy, with swinging censers, diffused clouds of heavy perfume. The priest was robed in brocade of gold, the bishop wore on his head a mitre, which was a true crown, sometimes of priceless value. All the worship of the God who was the Saviour of the humble, the God of sincere and intimate prayer, was reduced to ceremonial forms, to gestures, genuflexions, acts of penitence (*metanoiai*), to the verses and phrases of ritual. All that the art of the fifth and sixth centuries could offer to the crowds was there. The lay theatre closed its doors.

(*g*) *The Circus.*—But the Circus still continued, gratifying the thirst for blood, the brutal lust and cruel instincts of a populace whose soul had never been re-created by Christianity. The Gothic kings of Italy, down to the very last, disregarding the scruples of the Church, pandered to this disgraceful taste of their subjects. The same remark applies to the Byzantine emperors, who clearly had inherited from the Cæsars of Rome the obligation of the *circenses*. We must, however, say that the horse-races soon became the principal amusement in the Circus.

Political life of any and every kind was dead. "They cannot know the intentions of the emperor if he does not himself disclose them," sighs the rhetorician Procopius, who had read history and was brought up on sound philosophy. Nothing was written but panegyrics, hymns and official chronicles; recriminating pamphlets had only a very limited circulation. But when five hundred thousand human beings inhabit a great city, where there is an emperor, where news and travellers arrive from every part of the world, from far

www.dacoromanica.ro

distant Thule or the sources of the Nile, there must inevitably be debates, discussions and parties.

If Constantinople had contained a homogeneous population, if it had sheltered inhabitants who at least spoke the same language instead of those polyglots of the day who were equally familiar with Greek and Latin, barbarian or Asiatic dialects, these parties might have been literary or philosophic unions of all who were capable of taking interest in things intellectual. But such was the condition of that world-city, that Cosmopolis of the Bosphorus, in the age of Anastasius and Justinian, that parties were inevitably personal. There was then one body of clients, as has been said, for the ἄρχοντες; another for the clerics whose aim was to become patriarchs or bishops; a third for the relations of the emperor or for the victorious generals or the court exquisites, or the schemers in the government offices and ante-rooms who wished to obtain power, if not the supreme power itself. Lastly, there were the clients of the celebrities of the Circus, dancers, ballet-girls, pantomimists, athletes, slayers of animals and slayers of human beings. These factions were continually crossing and recrossing each other. Many a band which fought for a prelate under the pretext of a misunderstood and incomprehensible dogma, ended by itself menacing the emperor, provoking a political revolution and a change of government. Some such action might result from the paid applauders (the *claqueurs*) of a comedian or a gladiator. Alliances and combinations were continually made and unmade round those fixed points which were the ambition of a personage, his *household* of clients. This was the natural state of things in an Oriental society where passions blazed high, without any instruction, since there were only the schools of the rhetoricians and grammarians for the privileged, without any real grasp of the affairs of State, which were reserved for the emperor, without any knowledge of the laws, which were the study of specialists, without any bond of race, civilisation or a common past, while their religion was soon hidden behind the walls of empty ritual and gross materialism. Long before the renaissance the leading

www.dacoromanica.ro

principle at Byzantium had been *virtù*. There had been an antithesis, which Procopius proclaims, between the life based on principles, the calm φιλοσοφεῖν and the γενναῖος εἶναι, which had nothing in common with true goodness and nobility, but implied merely the aptitude to live and conquer under the inevitable circumstances which the spirit and the needs of the age imposed.

Let us begin at the bottom, with the games in the Circus. They flourished in the great effeminate and intellectual city of Antioch, at Apamea, Edessa and elsewhere certainly before the creation of Constantinople, which had only to follow the example of theatrical feasts and feuds. The Hippodrome of the capital was an immense structure, lavishly ornamented with statues, to which all the inhabitants of Constantinople flocked during the race meetings, at which the emperor himself presided on his marble throne; the chariot races gradually ousted all other amusements. Bets were laid on the drivers and the horses just as on the racehorses and ockeys of to-day. Immense interests were at stake and the spectators quivered with eagerness and greed. The licentious youths of the city headed the spectators; under certain aspects they must have resembled the bullies and blood-thirsty bravoes who form a part of the young working-men of Paris. The "gilded youth" of the capital, in their dress of consummate elegance, willingly fraternised with this unbridled mob. The factions in the Circus gradually became great popular parties possessing the ties and the influence of political parties in countries of impure constitutionalism. They formed veritable *Maffie*, *Tamany Halls* which claimed to settle everything according to their interests and to disorganise everything at their caprice. When the Jews and the Samaritans fought furiously at Cæsarea, they were said to have imitated the "Greens" and the "Blues."

"Every town," says Procopius, who is indignant at this savage passion for gambling, "has in the classes of the people its blue (βένετοι) and its green (πράσινοι) faction." The origin of these factions, which the same chronicler declares to be very ancient, must possibly be looked for in the religious

www.dacoromanica.ro

disputes for and against Christianity. They survived without any definite object, but nevertheless everyone thought himself bound in honour to be a "Blue" or a "Green" in the theatre as well as outside. Men brawled during the races, and fought in the taverns and streets. A trace of these customs lingered long in certain towns of Italy, which had been under the Byzantine government, at Venice and in many towns of Sicily. The Nicolotti and the Castellani of Venice, down to the sixteenth century, were rivals in the regattas and invariably came to blows afterwards.

The seditions began, in fact, under the Emperor Justin, when the great dispute between monophysites and diphysites, between the partisans and the enemies of the *henotikon* of Anastasius, had somewhat calmed down. Antioch gave the signal, and victory there, as in every other town, rested with the "Blues." After five years of struggle they were the chief power in the empire.

Under the reign of Justinian the feud of these factions (μέρη) still continued at Constantinople; the emperor, who had begun by commanding the soldiers of his uncle, the emperor Justin, and the empress Theodora, a former actress who was thoroughly familiar with the Hippodrome, were strong partisans. The fact was well known, and complaints were soon heard, from the "Greens" naturally, because the "Blues" counted the "Augustus" among their supporters. The emperor of the soldiers had always been their comrade and they had felt at ease with him; the new emperor of the people, the Cæsar of the gutter, remained all his life somewhat mixed up with the people, notwithstanding his isolation and sanctity. They insulted him with impunity in the riots, and adorned his sacred head with asses' ears to show their dissatisfaction. That excited and shameless crowd, the bawling demagogues, like those of Athens in the days of Aristophanes, hooted indiscriminately at Christ and the Virgin, the emperor, the ass, the Pretorian prætor and the grasping quæstor. Our modern ideas prevent us sometimes from realising this phenomenon.

Justinian made a grave mistake. He allowed John the

www.dacoromanica.ro

prefect of Cappadocia a free hand in restoring order. Two arrests were made in the mob. One man was "Green," the other "Blue." The prefect and the emperor had the whole world against them. Bands of incendiaries set fire to the palace, the portico of Constantine and the most splendid houses in the city. A nephew of Anastasius was made emperor against his will and was carried to the Hippodrome, precisely as in our days a provincial government might be installed in the House of Parliament or the Mayoralty of some capital. Then were heard, as if in the theatre, shouts of "Nika, Nika!" (conquer! conquer!), that savage cry which goaded on the gladiators and chariot-drivers. These young men of the people were very brave, as was seen at Antioch, when they dared to fight the Persians, with swords or merely stones in their hands, proclaiming in the face of the most dreaded foe the victory of the emperor, *βασιλεὺς καλλίνικος*.

Justinian thought of leaving the city; but Theodora, who gauged more correctly the soul of the "*demos*," dissuaded him. She had at her service a veteran *doryphorus* of her husband, Belisarius, who had returned from Persia to join the campaign against the Vandals with the *doryphori* and *hypaspistæ* of his suite; a barbarian had arrived with Huns and Heruli. When the vast crowd saw that swords were doing their bloody work, it dispersed, strewing with corpses the streets of the blackened and desecrated city. The emperor of a day met a martyr's death. No measures, however, were taken against the factions, and after a few days the "Blues" and the "Greens" hailed the Augustus Justinian, who resumed his throne, and no one gave another thought to the atrocities which had just been perpetrated. Constantinople resumed her accustomed life of unblushing licentiousness (532 A.D.).

Some years later the two parties came again into collision on New Year's Day; this time no mercy was shown, and the ringleaders were killed or thrown into the sea (539 A.D.) Twice again, in 541-542, heads were broken and houses burnt, but no grave results followed. Two years after there was a great uproar in the Circus, and fires in the neighbour-

www.dacoromanica.ro

hood; the emperor, who was present, finding no means of checking the disturbance, left the place, to punish later first the "Greens" and then his own "Blues." In 555 insults were offered to the new prefect, the two parties fought each to the death; the heir to the throne intervened and the guilty were punished. Justinian, however, loved the "Blues" to the last, and after the tumults of 561 his successor announced to this party that their emperor was dead, and told the "Greens" that Justinian, that is to say the prospect of punishment, still lived for them. It is to be noticed that this was the last revolt in the name of the factions of the Circus.

(*b*) *The Streets.*—The ancient place had retained its importance although there were no more temples or political platforms. The best society, the grandees of every class, met there every day, under the imperial porticoes of the Augusteion; the habit was called ἀγοράζειν. Each displayed there his wealth, his pride and the number of his retainers. Belisarius appeared there, after his final return from Italy, as the most powerful of the chiefs of special armies; he was always conspicuous among the officers and magistrates for the size of his suite.

Under the porticoes where the "booksellers" displayed their manuscripts, in front of the imperial palace, uneducated men of the lower classes were often to be seen arguing the most abstruse theological problems with the Greek or Syrian monks, who lived in the new convents of Constantinople, or with roadside preachers, regular Christian dervishes. The great question was that of the "natures" of Jesus Christ, and a man would proudly proclaim himself monophysite if he admitted that the Saviour had one single nature, diphysite if he believed the contrary, or a partisan of the Council of Chalcedon, of the Henotikon, and later an antagonist to the "three chapters," if he assented to the official compromise. The discussions often became stormy; for among these open-air doctors were found peripatetic saints, who dreamt visions and could work miracles, coming to proclaim loudly the truth in the face of the emperor himself, even at the price of martyrdom. Learned impostors exhibited with tireless

www.dacoromanica.ro

verbosity the manuscripts and letters of remote origin. The atmosphere was that of a gambling house, and the spectators were precisely the same as those who delighted in the tricks of the learned blind dog, which pointed out the good people and the bad, and became celebrated from these exploits. A little more and they came to blows, and thus a revolt would break out. Basiliscus, the usurper, who reigned two years, would gladly have banished his patriarch, but he did not dare to do so from fear of the monks. For a long time the bands of the common people at Jerusalem and Alexandria had been seen fighting for one archbishop or patriarch and against another, whom they thought heretical, and would not hesitate to throw into the water or burn at the stake, thus exacting summary justice like the Lynchers in the America of to-day. The guilty parties had their tongues cut out, and the episcopal interloper was arraigned before a council. You might see a pious *stylite* coming down from the summit of his pillar to harangue the people, or contending prelates mounted on the backs of asses to ape humility and thus better to arouse men's passions, while others protested against the imperial wishes in religious matters by draping their churches with black as a sign of mourning for orthodoxy; the patriarch protested against the emperor from the top of the *ambôn*, which served as a tribune (468). A Byzantine patriarch overthrew in his church, in the reign of Zeno, the seat of an imperial minister, and threatened to shave the minister's head and throw him to the fanatical mob. The people of the capital were excited even about the pictures in the heretical Manichean style which Anastasius had ordered a false priest to paint in his palace. The patriarchal church had more than once been desecrated by the religious parties, who tried to exclude each other. Macedonius, the patriarch, led against Anastasius an army of monks and a crowd in which were women and children clamouring against the crowned Manichean; the soldiers of the guard themselves saluted the head of the Church, and the emperor contemplated a flight to Asia, just as Justinian did before the revolt of the "Blues" and the "Greens." It

www.dacoromanica.ro

was necessary to arrest and remove the prelate in the night. Anastasius ordered the churches to be plundered and the monks beaten by troops of peasants. Processions singing the orthodox chant met those who sang unorthodox hymns, and came to blows; houses were set on fire in the sacrilegious uproar where murder was committed in the name of Christ, and here and there the name of a new emperor might be heard proclaimed. To Justin and Justinian is due the credit of having ended these incessant riots roused by discussions on dogma. They were not revived until the debate on the pictures of the saints in the eighth century.

It must be said, however, that the monks of St. Conon took part in the revolt of the Nika under Justinian, and that it was they who seized a number of prisoners under sentence of death in order to shelter them, by the right of sanctuary, in a church. The power of the clergy was shown in these grand processions of the ἐγκαίνια, or inauguration of churches, when the patriarch, accompanied sometimes by a colleague, occupied the triumphal car of the emperor, who walked in the throng of the people chanting the inaugural hymn, "Open your gates, ye emperors."

At other times the scarcity of provisions roused the masses to agitate. The emperor was bound to distribute to his capital, as also to certain other great cities of the East, corn, wine, bacon and barley. Vessels, whose cargoes and length of voyage were carefully calculated, brought the provisions, without which no order was maintained in Constantinople; for the populace, whose customary comforts of life were interfered with, demolished the house of the responsible prefect and shouted in the face of the emperor, even when foreign ambassadors were present, "Lord, give us our plenty" (*Domine, da nobis abundantiam*, or in Greek, Δέσποτα, εὐθηνίαν τῇ πόλει). When the false rumour of Justinian's death spread at Constantinople in 553, the bakeries were looted in three hours and the tradesmen kept their shops shut until a general illumination, ordered by the prefect, announced to the people the good health of the emperor.

www.dacoromanica.ro

c. *The Provinces of the Ancient Empire.*

The provinces served to feed the capital, to keep up the lordly splendour of the imperial court. The ancient Roman system of extortion was carried on by the Byzantines in the most cruel fashion. The millions of inhabitants who composed the population of the empire, although they were all Roman citizens entitled to that rank, were as provincials merely *tributaries* of Constantinople, its defenders and its martyrs.

(*a*) *The Provincial Towns.*—A distinction, however, must be drawn between townsfolk and countrymen. The former had by far the better position. They would, in fact, testify their discontent by a revolt, and the very feeble garrisons which were still maintained even in the largest centres, such as Antioch, the first city of the East, which the Persians swallowed up at a mouthful, or Thessalonica, which several times during the reign was in danger of becoming "Hun" or "Slav," were not capable of restoring order. Antioch the gay, the witty, the cultured, which could rise to heroism in the hour of danger, was a true republic. Alexandria, in the fifth century, burnt her magistrates who had fled for refuge to the temple of Serapis, and having lost as a penalty for the outrage her free food, her public baths and theatres, asked them back from the magnanimous emperor. In these cities the official representative of the emperor often hardly dared to act, and in difficult crises it was always the bishop, a priest, or some holy ascetic who spoke and implored the pity of the foreigner. Since it was notorious that the empire could no longer defend its subjects, who were left to depend on the state of their fortifications and provisions and on some passing battalion, it would have come off very badly if it had tried to command. Elementary schools, to which even the children of the neighbouring barbarians resorted, games in the Circus, pantomimes, gossip round the public notices, disputes between the young members of the *demos*, the processions and sermons of the Church, the arrival of caravans, the hard toil of the poorer workmen, petty political intrigues, discus-

www.dacoromanica.ro

sions on the various events and miracles—these were the daily features of life in a provincial city.

(*b*) *The Country.*—In the country there were only γεωργοί or agriculturists at the mercy of the δυνασταί or lords, before whom public authority always gave way. They owned large landed properties and at the same time, under certain conditions and with more or less legality, they possessed the inhabitants on those properties. They were, however, liable to pay to the empire the personal tribute of "their" peasants. Some became formidable by keeping up a little army of slaves, Isaurians or *buccellarii*. The small "Roman" proprietor had long ago disappeared.

(*c*) *The Barbarians Settled in the Provinces.*—There was, however, another class of countrymen to be found in certain parts. In some provinces barbarians had settled, that is to say in Europe only, where Goths had long occupied the districts of Thrace; where Slavs, received into Dacia, were soon to be tolerated in Dalmatia as new masters of Illyria; where there were Germans and Huns through the length and breadth of the country, where finally the Pannonian Danube belonged to the Avars, Gepidæ and Lombards. Certain of these provinces were completely given up to the *fœderati*, who in return for their military contingents gathered the taxes of the inhabitants; in such cases the ideal authority of the empire alone survived. In other places, however, there were nothing but barbarian settlements. The great proprietors had been forced to cede to them some part of their immense estates. By this concession a new class of small farmers was formed who were masters of their own persons and fields. Then, since it was Christian, or would soon become so, and would not avoid social relations with the ancient inhabitants, the new society which would be formed by intermarriage naturally held a position far superior to that of the poor peasants, possessing neither money, privileges nor arms, who were found by the invading barbarians.

(*d*) *The Barbarian Pillagers.*—The country was entirely abandoned to an enemy as mobile as the Arabs, as fierce-looking as the Huns, and as overwhelming in numbers as the

www.dacoromanica.ro

Slavs. It happened, however, just as during the Persian wars, that peasants and shepherds boldly faced foreign soldiers who wished to rob them, and often performed feats of valour at a time when Constantinople employed the most cowardly of her troops, who fled, whole regiments at a time, strewing the ground with their arms. Many of the ruined small proprietors, especially the younger men, left their village and trudged on foot, with a wallet on their back, to Constantinople, where they enlisted for the wars or in the palace-guards. The highest offices were in their grasp, and one of these ex-peasants became the emperor Justin.

(*e*) *Extent of the Empire.*—The provinces in Europe of which the empire retained the real sovereignty were Thrace, abandoned by the Goths who had no barbarian successors there, the Peloponnese, and certain parts of the coast of the modern Dalmatia and Albania. The frontier was marked by the encampments of Slavs, Avars and Gepido-Lombards. In Asia the "Romans" only possessed in the Caucasian regions the princes whom they protected and the castles which they guarded, in Lazica, Iberia and Armenia. The same state of affairs prevailed in the regions of Mesopotamia, always coveted and often ravaged by the Persians and the Arabs in their service. The Arab territories of Palmyra and Hira belonged to the emperor in name only, as Procopius acknowledges. Asia Minor, therefore, and Syria remain. The latter was first invaded under Justinian by his Persian enemy Chosroes; the former was destined to enjoy comparative peace for years to come. The sovereignty of the islands, which nothing so far disturbed, must not be omitted. Egypt, with its great city Alexandria, was one of the most precious provinces of the "Romans." Such was the Roman Empire in the early days of Justinian. Its frontiers corresponded roughly to those of Turkey before 1877.

D. *Neighbours of the Empire: Wars and Embassies.*

(*a*) *Huns and Goths.* — The policy of the Byzantine emperors of the fifth century was extremely timid. They

www.dacoromanica.ro

did nothing but watch impotently the ravages of the Trans-Danubian barbarians, whom they tried to bring over by pensions, and to pit one against the other, a game which may sometimes prove very dangerous. Modern Servia was the prey of the Huns, who transformed it into a desert, massacring and carrying off the inhabitants with them beyond the Danube. The ruthless devastators soon disappeared, but their disappearance was due to other historic factors than the imperial armies. The empire, however, was too feeble to take the place of those barbarians who left the field open. Zeno found himself on one occasion absolutely powerless in face of the Ostrogoths who had replaced their kinsmen, the Western Goths, as masters of the Balkan Peninsula; their king, Theodoric, was, it is said, preparing to besiege Constantinople, when the emperor succeeded in persuading him to attack Italy, governed by Odoacer, and to settle there with his barbarians as vice-regent of the empire.

Even after this new transmutation of enemies, the empire was so seriously menaced, and the capital was so completely exposed to the daring attacks of any passing chieftain, tbat Anastasius, Zeno's successor, himself a far-seeing statesman, so Procopius assures us, enclosed the Chersonnese, that peninsula which bears Constantinople like a large flower on its stalk, by a great wall, like that of the Chinese, the imperialists of the Far East.

(*b*) *Kingdom of Persia.*—During this period the Asiatic East had been more fortunate. There were indeed no real enemies on that side. That great βασιλεύς of Persia, who, recalling all the past history of conquest, only condescended to recognise a "Cæsar" in the Byzantine emperor, that sun-worshipper who despised the Jewish practices of Christianity, was without doubt a powerful monarch. He possessed vast accumulated wealth, admirable military traditions, soldiers, who were contented with the smallest pay, and wise and experienced generals. An immense simple energy was reflected in the military habits of that nation of shepherds. On their departure for a war the soldiers each threw a marked javelin into the vases in front of the emperor; on their return they

www.dacoromanica.ro

defiled before him to claim them; the emperor was thus able to reward or punish the survivors, and to form an idea of his losses. A man who apprehended the wrath of his master seated himself near a bronze fountain in the palace, and there with resignation awaited death or pardon. The Persian mountaineers, recalling the valiant deeds of the Parthian dynasty, felt the greatest contempt for the "Romans," who were chiefly represented in their eyes by the timid inhabitants of the plains and coasts.

The Persians always had their partisans amongst the small nations which partially separated the two empires. If the generals and princes of Persia were greedy during war, the *strategi* and *logothetæ* of Byzantium were grasping in peace. They claimed rights of monopoly, as in Lazica, ousted the merchants and impoverished the country. They showed little consideration in their treatment of the native chiefs. As the others were close at hand, they never failed to apply to them. How often before and after Justinian were there sieges and raids among the Caucasian valleys, on the plea of guarding the Caspian gates against the Huns or on some other more or less feeble pretext!

(*c*) *Transcaucasians and Armenians.*—Against these invaders of the border-lands the Romans employed the services of the Abasges, Lazes, and Armenians themselves, stiffening them with the garrisons of the castles or some hundreds of regulars, the *catalogi* or *numeri* of Mount Libanus. It was the traditional policy down to Justinian to throw some handfuls of gold to the White Huns or Ephtalites, the descendants of the ancient Scythians; they only waited for that to start on the warpath, fight the Persians and force them to *worship* their Khagan. King Perouz thus was killed in an ambuscade of the Huns with several of his sons. The Persians then paid tribute for two years to the barbarians.

(*d*) *Persian Wars.*—The warriors of Iran, on their side, asked the "Cæsar" for his gold, thousands of pounds yearly, carefully weighed out, which they promised not to use for gold coinage, an imperial privilege. To escape this burden an Eastern emperor made his Persian neighbour the guardian

www.dacoromanica.ro

of his own heir; King Kobad begged the same honour from the Cæsar, for his son, but his request was refused. The emperor had to resign himself to pay the four to six thousand pounds of gold yearly.

Nevertheless, the offers of an Arab prince jealous of his rival, who was under the protection of the Romans, the complaints of the Caucasians, or even the lust for booty and glory would flood the imperial territory with Persian cavalry. Chosroes, the "brother" of Justinian by the offer of adoption made by his father, especially delighted in humiliating the Roman soldiers, ransoming, burning and destroying the towns down to the shores of the sea, in which at Seleucia he dipped his bloody fingers as a sign of victory. He protested against the invasion of the country of the Lazes, against the building of the new Mesopotamic city of Dara, and against all sorts of outrages, real or imaginary, but mostly imaginary. While he was plundering to his heart's content he welcomed with stereotyped or ironical phrases the envoys of the emperor, and even signed jointly with them the treaties which he promptly evaded, as if he had never heard of them. His *magi* accompanied him everywhere, like the unlaid ghost of past feuds. Antioch was conquered, in spite of the resistance of its young craftsmen, and completely destroyed. Chosroes gloated over the delight of planting the inhabitants of what was formerly the wealthiest and gayest city of the Oriental world, as slaves at Chosroantioch, a town which he built for the purpose. The defenders of Edessa, who were still country folk, like the shepherds of the neighbourhood, were more lucky and escaped calamity, but only by paying a two-fold and heavy ransom.

Belisarius, who was twice called in against the Persian king, only once succeeded in conquering him. The troops employed in those regions were feeble and mediocre; there was no rallying of loyal veterans round a popular general; no landing of armies thoroughly equipped for a decisive campaign. When, as chance would have it, the army included some Heruli, naked but for belt and buckler, or some Goths of King Vitiges, the vigour of the Persian assaults was easily

www.dacoromanica.ro

crushed. But nothing could be done with the badly-armed mob and the nonentities of generals who ordinarily represented the defence. The invariable retreat is typical of the demoralisation of a once so glorious army (540-555).

Happily for the empire, the king who ruled on the other side of the Tigris did not dream of conquests. He was the patriarchal monarch of his subjects and nothing more. He disintegrated his dominions because he had neither the ability nor the inclination to govern. In spite of the rumours about the building of a Black Sea fleet by the barbarians to coerce Byzantium, the capital had nothing to fear from that quarter. Even if it could reach Constantinople, the Persian king would content himself with demanding that all the coined gold and all the treasures should be handed over to him, and would then at once return home.

(*e*) *Western Neighbours: the Vandals.*—Dalmatia obeyed the Gothic kings of Italy, who also possessed the whole of Sicily. Sardinia on the contrary belonged to those dreaded Vandals, who, having been summoned by the mutinous dissatisfaction of Boniface, the Roman commander, had created a barbarian kingdom of Africa.

The relations of the Eastern Empire, the *only* empire since 476, with the kings of Rome and the kings of Carthage were not identical. They were always more strained and precarious with the latter, whose subjects showed no willingness to adopt the Roman ideas and customs.

Genseric, or Giseric, had been the conqueror of Northern Africa. No idea was entertained of dislodging the fiery king "of the Vandals and Alani," whose successors struck coins representing themselves in the imperial robes with Latin inscriptions and emblems, and without any indication of vassalage under Rome whether Ancient or New. On the contrary the Vandal was summoned to Rome by an emperor's widow to wreak some act of revenge upon her second husband, the usurper of the throne. The son of Genseric, at first detained as a hostage at Rome, was soon set at liberty. The intervention of Marcian, the Eastern emperor, was contemptuously rejected.

www.dacoromanica.ro

These Germans, however, the successors by the caprice of chance to the old Carthaginians, were very troublesome, even to the Eastern Empire. Being masters of so wide a stretch of the coast, and not caring to trade as merchants, they naturally became pirates. The coasts of Dalmatia were ravaged, mostly at the cost of the Goths, as well as the islands of the Ionian Sea, such as Zante, and the coasts of the Peloponnesus, which were provinces of the "Greeks."

Leo I. (457-474), desirous of firmly establishing the throne of his *protégé* Anthemius, the Western emperor, was forced to fight them, and the Byzantine fleet, which had somewhat forgotten the science and virtues of war, restored the island of Sardinia and the town of Tripolis to the emperor. A great expedition was even planned on behalf of this Basiliscus who was soon to prove a "tyrant" and usurper. These vessels were destroyed. A new expedition did not yield any permanent results. Long years of inaction had completely disorganised the maritime forces of the Eastern Romans. Zeno, and especially the over-cautious Anastasius (491-518), the best neighbour of all the barbarians, saw without envy several kings of the stock of Genseric succeed to the crown of Carthage. One of these princes, Huneric, had even married Eudoxia, daughter of Valentinian III., who considered this marriage as the most humiliating insult.

Anastasius was the "friend" of the Vandal King Thrasamond, who was the brother-in-law of Theodoric the Ostrogoth; Justinian also was connected with Hilderic, the successor of Thrasamond, by friendly ties. But Gelimer overthrew him. He refused to surrender his royal prisoner and his relations to the Byzantines. As during this period complaints and deputations from the orthodox Christians, who were persecuted by the Arian king, streamed unceasingly into Byzantium, as a Gothic usurper who had appeared in Sardinia, and a Vandal tyrant of Tripolis sought help in return for offers of cession, and as the revolt was spreading more or less over the African kingdom, a large imperial expedition was decreed. Belisarius, the Illyrian Greek,

www.dacoromanica.ro

who had been distinguished as an imperial *doryphorus* in the Persian war, was ordered to proceed to Africa at the head of an army, and call on everyone to abandon Gelimer and rally round the standard of the fallen king.

The fleet was miserable so far as the spirit of the crews went; the men on the *dromons* were always afraid that they would sink to the bottom of the sea. Among the soldiers were to be found Huns, reluctant to enter on this distant campaign; Heruli, naked, cruel and treacherous; crafty Persians; Armenians speaking their own language, and numbers of Thracians and Greeks, all in the pay of the emperor; but above everything, there was a large number of the loyal followers of the different generals and military "Houses."

Unexpectedly, in spite of its eighty chiliarchs and its immense riches, amassed in Rome—down to the gates of Solomon's temple—and from every part, in spite of the pride of its kings, the Vandal kingdom crumbled at a touch. Carthage was taken after a battle with the king himself; a second victory at Tricameron was decisive; the king was captured on the mountain where he had taken refuge, together with his household and treasures. Belisarius himself came to Constantinople to make his royal prisoner kneel humbly at the feet of the emperor Callinicus, who celebrated a triumph to which Byzantium was unaccustomed.

The star of the Vandals had set. This little German nation had lost all its virtues in the midst of African voluptuousness, in those beautiful palaces surrounded with gardens and wonderful orchards, and at those Roman banquets which from the first they preferred to the frugal meals of the barbarian. The Northern race slowly died out on that borderland of the great burning deserts. Two defeats overthrew their empire, and the Vandals were buried under the ruins.

There remained the Moors, who were for the Romans of that day, 533, much what the Kabyles were, thirteen centuries later, when the French conquered Algeria: a poor race, living in huts, wrapped night and day in their burrows, having no arms but two javelins and spears—a whirlwind of

www.dacoromanica.ro

horsemen as shifting as the sands of the Sahara. They were almost devoid of religion, having only prophets who foretold the future, and hardly possessed any kings, but were at the mercy of chiefs bearing vague titles. The Vandals had succeeded in coming to some agreement with them, thus insuring ninety-five years of tranquillity to the "Lybians," the "Roman citizens" of other times. The generals of the Byzantine Cæsar were less diplomatic. Revolts and raids were always rife in the province, and in the daily savage encounters many a Roman leader lost his life ignobly, as for example, Solomon who succeeded Belisarius. The latter himself, being recalled from Sicily, failed to crush all the rebels. Among these latter must be reckoned the mutinous soldiers, who were far more dangerous than the Moors. The sole aim of this army was to pillage everywhere on any excuse. There was soon cause to regret the good days of order and justice under the German kings. The *doryphori* asserted their liberty and violated the two-fold oath to their master and the emperor. They marched armed through the towns, contrary to the custom which only allowed them to wear a sword. They filled the halls where their masters were carousing; surrounded by Vandal or Berber women, prizes for which they fought, they themselves resembled Moorish chiefs by their treachery and cruelty. Two tyrants, Stotzas and Maximinus, were proclaimed successively. A third, Gontharis, was murdered at the close of a banquet prolonged far into the night by some rivals, who proclaimed the victory of the emperor in the midst of the bloody relics of the feast.

When the *strategus* John enforced an imitation of the "pax romana" on Africa, it was hardly more than the grave of three races. A decade of petty wars had slowly swallowed up everything, and the age of the Vandals, by an irony of fate, was left as a bright memory of the past.

(*f*) *Ostrogoths.*—Soon after the defeat of Gelimer the Byzantines had seized Sardinia and Corsica. The Balearic Islands shared the same fate. Although the Visigoth King of Spain, Theudis, whose predecessors had never had any

www.dacoromanica.ro

relations with Constantinople, turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his kinsmen, the Vandals, and refused to attack imperial Africa, the quarrel between his successors, Athanagilde and Agila, brought the soldiers of Justinian to the Spanish coast. Such a policy was inevitable, from the moment when the Byzantine dominion had spread to the Pillars of Hercules, the modern Gibraltar, and when Africa and Spain formed one country. On that side, however, it was only necessary to conquer a few ports, and the kingdom of the Visigoths, which in spite of the religious disputes was immeasurably superior to that of Gelimer, was no more affected by it than modern Spain by the presence of the English on the rock of Gibraltar.

It can be seen from what has been said that Justinian, who never assumed the command of his army and remained all his life a Byzantine of Byzantium, devoted to his capital, its virtues and its vices, had never formed any scheme of conquest. The provinces which he won in the West fell into his hands one after the other automatically. The turn of the Ostrogoths had come round.

Odoacer, by his installation at Rome, had recognised the rights of the Emperor of Constantinople; he pretended to have received the power from the hands of Romulus Augustulus, the last Roman Emperor, and the embassy of senators which he sent to Zeno nominally brought to that monarch, now the sole emperor, *the abdication* of Augustulus, who no longer believed in the necessity of the double empire, and asked that the title of patrician might be conferred upon Odoacer, a request which was granted;[1] the patrician-king never assumed the diadem, nor claimed the right to strike a gold coinage, and was content with the vague title of "rex." Theodoric, who allowed himself more freedom of action, still retained some show of dependence on the Roman East, so as not to outrage the ideas and feelings of his age. He was a model neighbour of Anastasius and stamped his coins with

[1] Malchus, p. 236. There was, however, then an emperor of the West, a refugee at Constantinople, Nepos, whom Zeno appeared to wish to support.

www.dacoromanica.ro

the imperial portrait. He did not venture to give new laws to the Romans of his "kingdom," who were judged according to the old code of the Cæsars. He did not claim the imperial right of establishing the Christian doctrine, and, while he and his people remained Arian, he only persecuted once, and then reluctantly, the ὀρθόδοξοι, who held the belief of the emperor. The Popes were allowed to journey without hindrance to Constantinople to discuss dogmatic questions with the emperor, the defender of the faith, and to convene councils with his permission. Nowhere, neither in Dalmatia, where, however, usurpers had ruled, nor in Sicily, which the Goths completely occupied—with the exception, for some time, of Lilybæum, which had been surrendered to the Vandals as the dowry of a Gothic princess—nor on the frontiers had there been any conflict between the New Imperial Rome and the kingdom which had replaced Ancient Rome.

(*g*) *Conquest of Italy by the armies of Justinian; Belisarius.*—The great and unexpected success of the campaign against the Vandals excited the greed of the Byzantines. The Goths had at first helped the Romans to destroy the kingdom of Gelimer, who had imprisoned the Gothic wife of his predecessor and massacred the suite of that princess; Belisarius was able to obtain provisions for his army in Sicily. But these friendly relations were short-lived. The Romans demanded the restoration of Lilybæum, and the Italian government refused. This was a *casus belli;* and a second was forthcoming when Theodatus (Theodahad, or Latinised, Deodatus), a prince of the blood of Theodoric, ousted Amalasuntha, the daughter of this king, and even commanded the execution of this ally of Justinian, who had expressed the intention of withdrawing to Constantinople.

Justinian would never have undertaken an Italian campaign without Belisarius. But this general was tempted to play too long the rôle of *Conquistador* which he had assumed in Africa. He was supported by the money of the Vandals and the ranks of his loyal followers, the army of his house. He therefore attacked King Theodatus and conducted

www.dacoromanica.ro

with splendid resolution and boldness a campaign which soon proved exceedingly difficult, and it was not the fault of Belisarius if the decisive blow was struck by another. Only then, in the last act of the drama, did the Italian War become truly the war of the emperor. Hitherto Belisarius had behaved towards Justinian as Cortez, nine centuries afterwards, behaved towards the Catholic sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella.

Sicily was conquered in a few weeks (535 A.D.); Gothic Dalmatia only offered a feeble resistance; there were indeed no barbarian encampments in those two provinces. Naples was next attacked; the number of Germans settled in the vicinity of that town was also inconsiderable; it was captured by soldiers who went down into the aqueduct. At the same time the Franks, bribed with Byzantine gold, invaded the whole of Cisalpine Gaul and reached the marshes where Venice now stands. Vitiges, the new king, elected in the place of the weak Theodatus, tried to rally the warriors of his people round him at Ravenna. Belisarius was at Rome, where he was welcomed by the clergy and some *honoratiores*, who had not altogether forgotten the past; it was not until later that he won over by his valour the artisans and common people, who learnt to appreciate the unexpected achievements of this *Vilisarius*, whom they called a Greek, one of that race of rhetoricians, monks and runaway soldiers. Vitiges thought it necessary to execute at Ravenna the Roman senators whom he had retained round his person; the war thus assumed the aspect of an inter-racial struggle. Procopius, the historian of these irregular battles, which were quite as decisive as the engagements with the African Moors, asserts that the Goths offered several times to cede to the emperor Sicily, Calabria and Naples, and to pay a tribute, but that Belisarius wished to carry out in Italy the plan which had proved so successful in Africa. After all, it is uncertain if these offers were sincere. The Goths were not the Vandals, and the Vandals themselves had resisted until their race was exterminated. There were for many years desperate sieges at Rome, at Milan, where the Greeks had been summoned

www.dacoromanica.ro

by the archbishop, at Rimini, at Orvieto, at Urbino, and in every other place where the fortifications of the "old Romans" were still standing. The emperor, in the third year of the war, sent the eunuch Narses, an *a secretis*, a court official and an imperial favourite, but the newcomer did not condescend to be friendly with Belisarius, who assumed the character of a free-lance far more than that of a Byzantine general. The Goths themselves appreciated the latter so much that they offered him the throne of Vitiges, the splendid position of the emperors of the true Rome. He pretended to accept it in order to have done with the barbarian royalty. But when the suspicions of the court and the requirements of the war with Persia recalled him to Constantinople, the Goths chose for their kings successively Ilibad, Eraric and lastly that splendid warrior Totilas.

(*b*) *Italian Campaigns of Narses.*—Thanks to the wise energy of this new Gothic commander, Rome was besieged and, some time later, Naples surrendered; a Byzantine fleet was destroyed. Belisarius vainly hurried up to defend his work and threw himself into Rome; he was soon driven back as far as Sicily, whence he went to Constantinople and confessed that he had been completely defeated. Germanus, a kinsman of the emperor, was sent to save Sicily, but he died before leaving and the island was ravaged by Ostrogoth pirates. Belisarius, by the death of the empress, had lost his strongest supporter; he was retained at court as commander of the guards, an appointment which in his case was a brilliant degradation.

Narses meanwhile received sufficient troops. The Romans for the first time had a regular army in Italy. They ventured to offer battle in the open country to Totilas, who appeared in front of his men, robed in purple and wearing his crown, like a victim. He lost the battle of Taginæ in 552 and was killed in the rout. His successor, Teia, was not more fortunate. The death of this latter chief marked the close of the Ostrogoth dominion in Italy. Narses was able to defend this conquest, which was only partly due to him, against the cupidity of the Franks, who would willingly have taken the

www.dacoromanica.ro

place of the warriors of Theodoric in that desirable land of Italy. He left, however, the road to the sunny plains and pleasures of Italy open to these few thousands of uncivilised Alemanni and Franks who, almost naked, with shaggy hair, carrying only a sword and dart with a barbed head, ravaged the peninsula under the command of Litharis and Butilin. The first of these leaders of an expedition, which the kings of the Franks did not recognise, died from disease together with most of his followers; Butilin, who followed in his track, was completely defeated on his way back towards the Alps by the Roman general. Hardly anything was left of that rabble of rash warriors. Those of the Goths who looked to obtain their freedom through the success of the friends from the other side of the Alps, were forced to lay down their arms at the feet of the conqueror. The Germanic world had thus exhausted its efforts against these "Greeks," whom it had formerly so unwarrantably despised.

B. *The New Byzantine Rule.*

(*a*) *New System of Imperial Defence.*—Thus a new empire was founded which stretched from Mesopotamia to the Pillars of Hercules, and from the Danube to Lybia. The Mediterranean had once more become "Roman," and almost all who spoke Latin or Greek were emancipated henceforth from the yoke of the barbarians, which they had not, it is true, found galling. Justinian modified locally the ancient military and civil organisation of the empire, and protected the frontiers by numerous castles built on the Roman model, but with inferior materials and in a very hurried fashion. These castles were of some value against the Persians, who liked sieges and waged war cautiously without risking their troops; but inadequately garrisoned and badly kept up, they were far less useful on the Danube, where the Slavs and Avars were able to continue their invasions, both under Justinian himself and after him. The African castles, intended to strike awe into the clouds of Berber horsemen, were perhaps the most useful.

www.dacoromanica.ro

(*b*) *Army Reforms.*—Justinian did not stop there, but had the courage to undertake a general reform of the empire. A man of great activity and intelligence, who slept little and was not addicted to the pleasures of the table, he possessed the necessary qualities for the task. Commencing with the army he deprived the fine useless soldiers—the scholarii, the domestics, the guards, the "candidates," the *protectores* and *silentiarii* of their ancient privileges. He dispensed, later, with the services of the *limitanei*, the peasant-soldiers who guarded the frontiers. The effective combatants were entered on the lists and received pay according to their length of service.

(*c*) *The New Administration.*—Changes were introduced into the administration. Severe enactments were posted up against any who should be guilty of those disgraceful vices which had only too long been tolerated in the empire. The empress commanded that a large number of women of immoral life should be interned in the new Monastery of Penitence. In order to put an end to chicanery he selected from the "dark forest" of Roman law the practical rules which, being carefully systematised, composed his Code, the only standard of law for the future.

(*d*) *Other Reforms.*—But these reforms sometimes miscarried. Such officials as there were could not now adapt themselves to the needs of morality. The measures taken to watch the sources of the revenues of the State, to guarantee to the soldiers their quarters and their rations, the *annona*, to abolish everything that was no longer indispensable to the regular conduct of affairs, the heavy penalties imposed on young men of loose life and the system of monopolies, which was intended to save the finances, roused a deep and widespread discontent. It is said that Procopius, who had been the historian of this reign and the panegyrist of the emperor, drew up, in the name of these influential and wealthy malcontents, a pamphlet containing the most abominable calumnies, which was read with eagerness and complacency. This incident shows that the notion of a community of interests had almost disappeared in this Roman East.

www.dacoromanica.ro

F. *The Governing Principles in the Byzantine World.*

Some principle, some national feeling or tradition, was required for the empire, in default of which it could not live; for it must be admitted the inhabitants had no interest in supporting it.

(*a*) *The Personality of the Emperor.*—There was, of course, the religion of the emperor, but the divine Cæsar was often compelled to bow before the wishes of the Constantinopolitan populace, which heaped insults on his head. It was never forgotten that he was often, to start with, a usurper, who had employed his position as head of the guards to get himself proclaimed emperor, as Justin did (518-527), a brave old soldier without any education, unable even to sign his name. In other cases the emperor had contrived his family relations in such a way that he was, on the death of the reigning emperor, the nearest of his kinsmen; thus the marriage of the daughters and nieces of the Augusti had become an important State affair. The emperor had enlisted the sympathy of the patriarch, whose rôle was important, since he crowned the sovereign with his own hands; he had gained the support of those who had most followers and the largest armed retinue; he had even dabbled in the games of the Circus to secure the support of the "Greens" or the "Blues." These persons had a claim on him by their own services and his promises. The low and often degraded origin of the empress—for example Theodora, daughter of a bear-keeper in the Hippodrome—without being a blot in a society which made little distinction of persons, weakened to some degree the authority of the emperor by all the mean connections and ineradicable predilections which the imperial consort retained. The system of women and favourites had now become a necessity; the emperor required the most subtle diplomacy, the most delicate balancing of various and shifting forces, which were mainly personal and illegal, in order to rule and live in peace. Plots and rebellions were always being hatched in that great suspicious world of Byzantium, composed of unscrupulous and insignificant upstarts, and a medley of barbarians and plebeians,

www.dacoromanica.ro

who regarded falsehood, adultery, rape, poisoning and cold-blooded assassination as the natural acts of the political drama, in which they claimed to play by their power the foremost part. These emperors, Justinian included, did not deserve the affection of their subjects, which they never indeed possessed.

(*b*) *Latin and Greek elements in the Empire.*—Did any racial feeling really exist? There has been much talk of that feeling of Hellenism which would have endowed the new empire with the force necessary to support it for a thousand years against every danger. We shall see what this boasted Hellenism was. For the moment it is enough to say that there was no longer any dominant race, any race possessing a distinct self-consciousness. All the dignitaries derived their titles from the Roman empire; the army was Roman as well as everything connected with the State. The emperor signed in Latin, he promulgated mostly Latin laws and added to those which were written in Greek the Latin date of the consulship. The coins bore usually Latin legends; the high officials used seals (*bullæ*) which had on one side a Latin inscription, on the other a Greek. But Trebonian of Pamphylia, the compiler of the Latin Code, employed a Greek *bulla*, and it appears that the consuls used on their seals the language prevailing at Byzantium, while they retained Latin on their carved triptychs. The municipal inscriptions at Byzantium were in Greek. The imperial colleges of the East also supplied Latin teaching, and a thorough knowledge of the Latin language was required from all who followed the courses of the great law schools at Constantinople and at Berytus, which latter was later transferred to Sidon. Treaties and *litteræ sacræ* were still worded in Latin, although Greek was also employed in the customary form of these documents after the year 562. Justinian preserved the Latin character in his great compilation, his *Corpus Juris*, following the example of his predecessor, Theodosius the Younger, a century before. The words of command were given in Latin, and the army welcomed the emperor in this obsolete language, while the populace of Constantinople wished him "πολλὰ ἔτη." The

www.dacoromanica.ro

reports, however, which the emperor received were composed in the language with which the writer was most familiar. The names which have come down are very mixed; we find Greek names in the Latin provinces (Olybrius, Glycerius, emperors of the West), Latin names in the Greek provinces (Justin, Justinian, Eastern emperors). Three peasants left Illyricum to enlist at Byzantium; one was called Justin, the two others bore names as typically Greek as Zimarchos and Detybistes. There were Latin grammarians and Greek γραμματικοί at Constantinople, although an edict of the emperor Valentinian gave the first place to the Greeks. The inhabitants of Byzantium were neither Greeks nor Romans, but simply Byzantines; consequently they could not show any racial characteristics. The Hellenes were the Epirots, the inhabitants of Ancient Greece and the Isles. But, according to the old parlance, the Romans of Rome, the barbarians of Italy and Africa, gave the troops of Justinian the nickname of Greeks, Γραικοί, "Greeks or their like." There were Romans who "Hellenised," and Romans in the ancient and strict sense of the word. The officers and officials spoke fluently Greek, Latin and some Oriental language. But the Armenian language, for instance, was never a "Roman language," as the two others; it always remained a barbarous *patois*. To form some notion of these conditions of life, we must recall Austria after 1866, which admitted herself to be German and Hungarian, and was at the same time, without wishing to admit it, Slav and Roumanian.

The fact remains that the Greek language slowly found its way into literature and into the State. But we must not suppose that the empire of the East was almost entirely Hellenised. Far from it. It is not true that the Greek language represented a superior form of thought or that it was recognised to be the classical language, that of the great poets, writers and philosophers who were still read in the schools, but mostly in extracts for the sake of learning the grammar. The best traditions of style were completely forgotten, and the most distinguished rhetoricians, Procopius, Agathias, Paul the Patrician, wrote a clumsy language which required to be

www.dacoromanica.ro

deciphered rather than read, and was singularly destructive to the descriptive talent and gift of apt expression which the first-named certainly possessed, no less than to the native elegance of the second, who ventured even to speak of Atticisms. A certain Corippus distinguished himself by singing in Latin the great exploits of the general John and the first efforts of Justin II; at an epoch when there was hardly any Greek poetry left, Latin poetry still bore belated fruit. The Greek edicts of Justinian are couched in the same clumsy jargon, and he declared on one occasion that this language was for him the "vulgar" tongue. The populace of Byzantium, which spoke Greek, was proud of being able to insert among its addresses to the emperor the Roman "*tu vincas*" which the Greek chroniclers reproduce.

(*c*) *Part played by the Greek language in the Eastern Church.* —At this epoch the official and the literary language was necessarily that of the Church, and, from the outset, this Church of Constantinople, founded at first in the regions of Syria and Egypt, whither Hellenism had been transplanted and firmly established by the Macedonian dynasts of days now long past, then in the purely Greek regions of Asia Minor, and later transplanted into the Greek Peloponnese, assumed a Greek character which it never lost. Every district which was detached from the Western empire to pass under the government of the Byzantines thus came into the sphere of the Patriarch of Constantinople and Grecised his Church; this happened later in the case of Dalmatia and Africa. In Syria the Syrian liturgy could not hold its own. The Armenians had great difficulty in maintaining a national Church. The work of the priests and the monks was allied with that of the pagan grammarians, who had taught even the nobles of the wild Caucasian districts some knowledge of Greek in order to effect slowly the triumph of that language. We must not also misunderstand the influence of this capital which, like all the towns on the coast, had a large Greek population; since the time of Justinian the street cries were in Greek. But the empire owed all its vitality to the past of Rome, and it never abandoned the name of Roman, which, becoming later the

www.dacoromanica.ro

roum of the Turks, is still used to designate Roumelia. The Greek language was only victorious in the highest branches of civilisation, while the empire remained what it had always been, an agglomeration of nationalities, governed according to the Roman laws and holding a political ideal which had been formed at Rome.

(*d*) *Byzantine Christianity.*—But to prove this, is to prove once more the absence of any psychological bond between these provinces, so different from the point of view of geography, ethnography and history, which this feeling of civilisation permeated. Such a bond must, however, have existed. At first it was the pride felt at belonging to the ancient civilisation, so venerable and beneficent. Soon it was Christianity. The Roman empire became more and more the Christian world, the *true* Christian world, "orthodox" if not Catholic. Rejecting the West as Arian under the Goths, as idolatrous during the dispute as to images, as perverters of dogma under the Pope, and anathematizing the Musulmans without trying to convert them, it acquired the consciousness of holding the one and only Christian truth, and of thus being the new "chosen people" of the Lord.

This belief, which was destined later to work wonders, was very strong in the sixth century. The *icons*, the fragments of the true cross, the bones of the saints and martyrs had attracted the immemorial reverence which surrounded the old Asiatic idols. But, apart from some groups of pagans in the country and of philosophers of the Attic school which was soon suppressed, the most enlightened classes, thanks to the schools and thanks to the diligent study of the ancient authors, from Homer to Plato, as well as to the works of art which were tolerated in the public square and the Hippodrome, still retained something of pagan scepticism and ancient superstitions. There existed for Procopius, the foremost writer of his day, a "God of the Christians," whom he apparently recognised and whose work of redemption he explained, and at the same time another God, unknown, indefinable and all-powerful, from

www.dacoromanica.ro

whom proceeded the great issues in the life of the individual and the nation. Procopius believed in prophecies and oracles, and he goes out of his way to mention them on every page of his history, which was intended to hand down the truth, and if he leaves each reader free to believe or deny them, it is only the sign of an accomplished scholar and subtle thinker. His belief in oracles is perhaps stronger than that in Christ.

Mention must be made of the measures which Justinian was compelled to adopt against those not infrequent adherents to the old law who were called "Hellenes," because they still sacrificed to the Hellenic gods. Some old astrologers were paraded through the towns on the backs of camels. The same emperor vigorously championed the rights of the orthodox Church and prosecuted in every province those heretical and ascetic sects — Donatists, Eutychians, Manicheans — who would not recognise the Christian dogma in the form which had been established at Nicea, Ephesus and Chalcedon. There were even fights between the soldiers and the peasants who professed these doctrines. Many pretended to give way, others went over to the barbarians or removed to other parts of the empire. The rich treasures of the Arian Church were confiscated. During this most religious reign many large and beautiful churches, glittering with mosaics, were built at Constantinople and elsewhere, in a new style which found its most perfect expression in the famous church of St. Sophia; but the populace of Constantinople had not the opportunity of mixing in those religious disputes, to which they always imparted a violent and disorderly character. This emperor, more influenced by political considerations than convinced of the legality of fanaticism, tried more than once a compromise based on violence and corruption, and ended by tolerating the Monophysitism, henceforward called Jacobitism, of Syria and Egypt, which represented in those countries a national religion. Theodora was actually a supporter of the Monophysites. Through her solicitude the monks of Syria obtained two convents in Constantinople itself.

www.dacoromanica.ro

The succeeding events in Byzantine history may be grouped under these two principal points of view: contraction in Constantinople and contraction in the orthodox faith. A first period ought to include the struggles with the barbarians down to the moment when these latter—barbarians of the West, barbarians of the Danube, and barbarians of the East—borrowed from Constantinople all its other principles: Christianity, civilisation and the idea of imperialism, and wished to establish the new Roman empire of the Germans, Slavs or Arabs. Against these repeated onslaughts the empire will be seen to have held the shield of the Byzantine walls and the unwavering Byzantine orthodoxy.

CHAPTER II

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE WORK OF JUSTINIAN (565-610) AVAR AND SLAV DISTURBANCES—NEW PERSIAN WARS.

(*a*) *Barbarian attacks after Justinian.*—The absolutely ephemeral character of Justinian's creation was soon shown. The empire of the *Orbis Terrarum* had no coherence and was in fact at the mercy of the barbarians.

For many years to come there were battles with the Persians and the tribes of the Caucasus, their allies. The castles on the Danube were almost useless, and served rather as refuges for the inhabitants of the country districts, harassed by those bands of Slavs and Coutrigourians and Outrigourian Huns, who were soon to be united in the new Hun Empire, that of the Khagan of the Avars, master of Pannonia and successor to Attila. From the great boundary river to Constantinople there were hardly any troops capable of offering resistance, and the garrison of the imperial city did not exceed a few hundreds of *scholarii*, pampered and gorgeous soldiers, who could not be reckoned among fighting men.

www.dacoromanica.ro

This condition of affairs was visible in a most humiliating manner at the time of the invasion of the "Huns" in 558. While one of their divisions marched towards the pass of Thermopylæ, which it did not succeed in forcing, others took the high road to Constantinople. The great city was for a moment paralysed by the dread of a sack like that of Antioch, and the treasures of the churches were removed. Once again the emperor did not move. Fortunately he had the fleet, the peasants of the vicinity, some brave Thracians and the military skill of the veteran Belisarius; to form cavalry, recourse was had to the horses of private individuals and of the churches, and even to the precious stud of the Circus itself. The unsuspecting heroism of the barbarians made the task of defence easier. They allowed themselves to be surrounded by the handful of hoplites of the generalissimo; some imagined that they could take Constantinople, in spite of the imperial galleys, on flat rafts of wood and reeds such as are still employed on the rivers of Moldavia. They were drowned in the attempt, but barbarian troops kept roaming round Constantinople, even when the emperor left the town to superintend personally the repair of the Long Walls of Anastasius. Justinian pretended to fit out a fleet on the Danube, ransomed the captives, coined gold, and by this same gold roused the Outrigourians against the Coutrigourians. By such manœuvres only was it henceforth possible to uphold the "majesty of the empire." "It comes from God," wrote the poet Corippus, when describing the royal pomp of this Byzantine court under Justin II., "and needs no earthly arms" (*Res Romana dei est, terrenis non eget armis*).

(*b*) *Byzantine Diplomacy*.—There existed still the art of diplomacy, the delicate subtlety of word and style (the Turks complained that the Romans "had ten tongues and one talent, deceit"), the indefinable prestige of that unrivalled New Rome, of these marble palaces, of those audience-halls where the silken curtain was suddenly drawn aside to display the Basileus, the emperor, seated on a golden throne, under a canopy of gold, on his head a golden crown flashing with

www.dacoromanica.ro

diamonds, sapphires, rubies and emeralds, while the guard of *scholarii*, all in golden armour, stood like statues round the incarnate divinity. The Avar, the Slav, the enemy of the hour, fell to the earth before this superhuman revelation, and strewed the marble pavement with the tresses of his wild and flowing hair. The treasures, accumulated in the course of centuries, were at the emperor's side, and a liberal hand was ready to load with costly gifts the barbarians who "loved peace." Those Avar Khagans and Slavonic chiefs had no ambition; no ruling principle, no overwhelming religious enthusiasm, no sense of traditional and implacable enmity led them against the ill-defended walls of Byzantium. They were not rivals of the emperor, nor usurpers of the empire, but dull-witted barbarians, full of vulgar greed, whom it was easy to win over by bribes. Their tribes had long possessed on the further bank of the Danube all the land necessary for their crops and their hunting.

There would not therefore be any wars in the true sense of the word, but numberless raids, whose one object was to renew the supply of slaves and to prompt the generosity of the emperor. The subjects suffered, the sovereign submitted and paid; but nevertheless he remained the only legitimate authority, the only divine power existing on earth. Without him the world could not exist; that was the conviction of the tributaries crushed by impositions and by these barbarians, who marked their path with fire and sword, and cut themselves straps from the backs of the incompetent generals of the empire. "Rome" existed not merely because she *wished* to last, but because her existence was essential. Without her the world would relapse into a chaos of everlasting war, so long as one savage warrior survived.

(*c*) *Policy of Justin II.; Diplomatic Victories of the Empire.* —The historian of the reign of Justin II. (565-578), who succeeded to the throne at a somewhat mature age, attributes to that emperor the political system of prestige and presents —silver, golden chains, silken robes and titles. He had only thirteen years in which to realise this.

This policy did not succeed so easily on the Persian side.

www.dacoromanica.ro

Chosroes still lived and his object was to recover the Caucasian provinces, "Persarmenia," and to secure the Byzantine pension, that is to say, to swell the revenues which he coveted. Justin, in feeble health, was forced to submit, and could not even obtain in exchange the town of Dara. The empire had vainly accepted an alliance with the Sogdaite Turks, dwellers in the regions of the Sir-Daria and the Amour-Daria, mountaineers from the Altaï, whose savage energy had just conquered the towns of the Ephtalite Huns, now effeminate by civilisation.

Justin and Tiberius, his general and viceroy, rightly estimated that the principal interests of the empire of the East lay on the Eastern frontier. Relations with their other neighbours were totally neglected. The Avars were able to settle in the south of Pannonia and reach the two Roman cities of Sirmium and Singidunum, which barred their road into Thrace and Illyria, and were incessantly attacked. They were free to lead their old life in the steppe and wring tribute from the Slavonic tribes on the Danube, who were fated to recognise in the Khagan a master in the style of Attila. They were equally able to come to terms with the Lombards and to destroy for ever the power of the Gepidæ.

(*d*) *Lombard invasion of Italy.*—The presence of the Avars was, however, a perpetual obstacle to the Lombards; they would no longer draw from the empire those ransoms which the newcomers had monopolised. They followed, therefore, the example set long before by Theodoric, and more recently by Leutharis and Butilin, the Franco-Alaman chiefs who had swooped down on Italy from the Western Alps. These latter were able to ravage the country with impunity, notwithstanding the presence of the twice-victorious Narses with a large army. The Lombard invasion, through the Eastern gate of the Alps, encountered far less resistance; fresh Frankish warriors had recently come and it was impossible to get rid of them. It is doubtful whether, with the exception of the garrisons at Pavia and Milan, the Romans commanded by an *imperial delegate* or exarch, had taken steps,

www.dacoromanica.ro

for the effective administration of the North of the Peninsula. However that may be, Alboin, the Lombard commander, entered Italy and established himself there as "King." Venice, Rome, Naples and Sicily remained Byzantine, scattered but important fragments of the provinces which cost such labour to construct. The rest reverted to barbarism and had once more an aristocracy of boorish warriors, a dynasty of heretical Arians and a class of small German proprietors. All the complaints made to Constantinople were futile. The answer given to the Italians suggested that the Lombards and even the Franks should be approached by bribery, in order to liberate the country: the answer was in keeping with the *system*. Money and ambassadors were sent by the emperor, but the invaders were not induced to move. In Italy, as in Mesopotamia and the Caucasus, the empire, to the mortification of the Christians, the orthodox, and the Old Romans, had to yield to the infidels and barbarians, and it no longer disguised its inability to perform its great historic mission.

(*e*) *The Emperor Tiberius.*—The reign of Tiberius, surnamed Constantine (578-582), the successor of Justin II., was a fac-simile of that of Justin himself, which the former had for so many years conducted. There were conflicts in the Caucasus; a pitched battle in Armenia against Chosroes himself, who was completely defeated (581), a victory which led to the recovery of the lost provinces; quarrels with the Avars about the tribute and possession of the two border-towns, and indifference as to Italy. Tiberius soon died, and, according to custom, Maurice, his favourite, having become general of the empire and kinsman of the emperor, succeeded to the crown (582-602).

(*f*) *Military government under Maurice: Wars with Persia.*—He was a lover of poetry and philosophy, an omnivorous reader, and a prince of gentle character, devoid of any military talent, as was evident from the Persian campaign, where he was beaten, though he afterwards conquered and celebrated his military triumph and his marriage with an emperor's daughter at Constantinople. Maurice, however, wished to

www.dacoromanica.ro

introduce innovations into the political régime inaugurated by Justin; these failed and brought about his ruin. These attempts and the tragedy in which they culminated in 602 are the only interesting features of a reign of nearly twenty years.

He adopted no new policy towards the Persians, who continued their traditional frontier warfare, but a fortunate combination of chances enabled his generals in the East to win unusual successes. Hormisdas, the son of the great Chosroes, had not inherited the invincible energy, the strategic ability, and the knack of using his opportunities which his heroic father possessed. He left to others the task of fighting an hereditary enemy whom he despised; there was a perpetual series of expeditions commanded by the *cardarigan* or royal generalissimo. This post of defender of the empire happened to devolve on Bahram, a member of the seven families which supplied the *peers* of the king. He was, moreover, a brutal and unscrupulous character, having many supporters among the Persians themselves or among the Jews, who had long since come from Palestine and showed themselves no less restless on their new soil than in their old country. A palace revolution, doubtless contrived by his ambition, effected the fall of Hormisdas (590). One of the sons of the fallen prince was placed beneath the golden canopy. He put out his father's eyes, killed his brother and the latter's mother, and to crown all ordered Hormisdas to be beaten to death, in order to escape his complaints and reproaches.

Bahram on his side, "the friend of the gods, the brilliant victor, the foe to tyrants, satrap of the grandees, master of the power of the Persians, shrewd, lordly, god-fearing, a good administrator, prudent, chaste and philanthropic," refused to recognise the young assassin, whom he simply called "the boy of Hormisdas." Chosroes II. was reduced to seek refuge on the Roman territory which his grandfather had so often ruined. There by the emperor's command he received a cordial welcome, as well as the military forces necessary to procure his restoration. While he entertained his countrymen

www.dacoromanica.ro

and the strangers at his rose-decked tables, the "Romans" gave him successively the possession of Babylon and Ctesiphon. where they would never have entered without the help of the Persian legitimists who preferred Chosroes with all his incapacity and his crimes, to the ability of the usurper. The king of the Magi, the descendant of the conqueror of Syria, received a Roman guard, styled the emperor his father, restored the spoils of the churches, made offerings to the saints, and married a Christian wife, Sira.

(*g*) *Attempts to recover the Danubian frontier.*—This immense success which was accompanied by the gift of Dara, that bone of contention, inspired Maurice with the bold project of winning back from the Avars of Pannonia and the Trans-Carpathian Slavs the possession of the banks of the Danube, and of preventing henceforward by a resolute annual campaign these inroads of the barbarians who, at the beginning of this reign, had once more reached the Long Walls.

This interminable war much resembles that which the descendants of Constantine the Great waged in the fourth century against the Sarmatians and the Goths, who at that era filled the place of the Avars and the Slavs. Marcianopolis and Tomi, which had risen from its ruins and become once more an important city, formed the headquarters of the army. Troops were landed at several points on the left bank, from the Wallachian Steppe of Baragan, where the army was decimated by thirst and by the darts of the Slavonic peasants, as far as the villages of the Gepidæ, with their drunken warriors, at the mouth of the Theiss. Several Slavonic chieftains of these tribes, Ardagast, Piragast, Musacius, were defeated, captured or put to death. The Avars themselves who had flocked to Constantiola, near Singidunum, to Vidin-Bononia, and as far as the countries of the Delta of the Danube, suffered considerable losses. But there was no means of subduing them with the feeble forces which a Roman emperor of that time had at his disposal. Fresh bands appeared the very next day after a victory. Many a Byzantine officer was compelled to shelter his troops in the

www.dacoromanica.ro

defiles of the Balkans. After a sortie of Maurice himself, who was familiar with these foes described in his *Strategikon*, after that imposing progress which stopped at Anchialus, the barbarians in their turn visited that town, pushed on to Perinthus and ventured to besiege the general Priscus at Tzurulon, close to the capital. It was necessary to satisfy the demands of the Avars, who wanted 20,000 pieces of gold added to their tribute, but the emperor soon saw that his resources did not permit of his buying the peace of Thrace at so high a price, and the tedious half-hearted war began afresh.

(*h*) *Overthrow of the Byzantine Power in the West.*—The undivided attention of the emperor was concentrated on it. The rest of the subjects of Justinian lived the life which the barbarians permitted them. In Africa little regard was paid to the bonds with that distant Rome of the East where other races spoke unknown tongues. Moorish chiefs broke into revolt; the imperial officers lured them into ambuscades and re-established peace along the coast-districts at anyrate. In Spain no trace remained of the Roman power which had been feeble from the outset. In Italy, finally, since there were still soldiers of the empire at Rome, Naples and in Sicily and the large islands of the Western Sea, the Lombards might, strictly speaking, be regarded as invaders destined to disappear or to accept the position of allies of the emperor. Certainly in the eyes of contemporaries there was no great difference between Italy humbled by the Lombard scourge and Thrace so often invaded by Slavonic tribes and Avar hordes. Both sides attached most importance to the possession of the towns. Maurice was so filled with the illusion that he owned the *imperium orbis* in its fullest sense, that by his will he destined the East to a son whom he had baptised Theodosius, in memory of Theodosius the Great, and the West to the other who called himself by the typically Roman name of Tiberius, after his imperial predecessor.

(*i*) *Fall of the Emperor Maurice from Mutiny in the Army.*—The inhabitants of Constantinople, masters of the person of the emperor, were fairly contented with Maurice down to

www.dacoromanica.ro

the time when old age made him miserly and stingy in his doles of the *annona* and silver coins during the triumphal processions and spectacles of the Circus. Couplets had long been sung in the streets against the emperor who could never win a battle, and then against the opponent of the miracles of Saint Euphemia and the apt pupil of the heretic Marcion. They did not place any confidence in him, and the tidings of an Avar raid made them think of seeking safety in Asia. The emperor, like Justinian, was a patron of the "Blues," and the "Greens" hated him. During a famine stones were thrown at him in the church on Christmas Day itself, and the heir to the empire of the East had to be smuggled away under a cloak, while the mob paraded on an ass a monk who resembled the emperor, accompanying the procession with insulting and ribald songs.

But the blow was destined to come from the army which had been subjected to radical changes by the measures of Justinian. The rôle of the barbarians had almost disappeared; at most there were only a few names of German or "Hun" officers, such as Asimuth, Gondoes, Drocto, Ilifreda. The retainers of the *generals*, the hypaspists, were insignificant except at Constantinople itself: the armies, in which this loyal and devoted element was once so prominent, were no longer to be seen. The army was now the property of the emperor; the soldiers in each province belonged to the dominant nationality. The soldiers who fought on the Danube spoke Latin and were liable to misunderstand the ancient Latin words of command, which had a different meaning for them. The provincial levies were sometimes commanded by powerful nobles or by bishops, as, for instance, Domitian of Melitene, a kinsman of Maurice.

This army knew its business fairly well, and it could show courage on occasion; it submitted to terrible punishments, such as impalement. But it stipulated to serve only from St. George's Day to the feast of St. Demetrius, to have good winter quarters in the towns, to divide among the combatants all the spoils of the enemy, and to receive regularly at the

www.dacoromanica.ro

dimissio in autumn its *stipendia* in good gold coins, and not in clothes or arms. It desired pensions for the veterans, and even the privilege of bequeathing to the son the father's position in the army. Finally it wished for tolerant leaders who were disposed to pet and flatter it in every way.

If its requests were refused, it raised without remorse or fear the standard of revolt, as in the days of the anarchical legions, whom the enrolment of the barbarians had destroyed. The soldiers hissed the edicts of the emperor, who wished to economise at their expense, sent them to find their own supplies in a barbarian country, or invited them to pass the winter in face of the enemy, while the officers enjoyed leisure at Byzantium. The imperial standards were thrown to the ground, the statues of the sovereign were broken to pieces; the mutineers went so far as to pelt with showers of stones the sacred images from whom victory against the pagans was hoped for. In Asia Priscus was besieged at Edessa and was forced to fly. Philippicus, his successor, had extreme difficulty in obtaining recognition.

Another mutiny, which was quelled, broke out on the Danube. That army, however, revolted for the second time against the order to pass the winter in the middle of the Slavs on those ice-bound shores, without food or any prospect of booty. Phocas, a centurion, who had already been punished for insubordination, a crafty and cruel Greek, was proclaimed lieutenant of the empire or exarch, a situation equal to that of the viceroy of Italy, on the shield which was used to display a new emperor. The mutineers boldly marched on Constantinople, as Vitalian had done, for the last time, in the fifth century. Maurice could only count on the δήμοι and their chiefs, who may fairly be compared to those chiefs of the districts, the *sestieri* of Venice, or parishes, since their nucleus was the churches, which were certainly of Byzantine origin in this latter town. He was, however, too "Blue" for the "Greens" to take any interest in his fortunes. He was cheered by the "Blues" only, when the herald announced in the town that there was a military revolt, but that the loyal

www.dacoromanica.ro

citizens had no grounds for fear. But soon afterwards he took it into his head to pursue the patrician Germanus, whose daughter was married to the young Theodosius, even into the sacred sanctuary of the church. The "Blues" themselves then abandoned the emperor, the "Greens" went to see Phocas in his camp, and hailed him emperor. Another herald went to St. Sophia and summoned from the top of the *ambón* the senate and the patriarch to appear before the new Augustus. Maurice fled, but was captured by Phocas, who entered Constantinople in the chariot drawn by four white horses. Soon afterwards the headless trunks of the emperor and his family floated on the waters of the Bosphorus under the eyes of a large and callous crowd. A deed had been done such as Constantinople had never witnessed (602).

(*j*) *Phocas the Usurper.*—The reign of this cruel and drunken veteran (602-610) was unparalleled. The Avars and the Slavs had a free hand to plunder Thrace and settle there; the Slavonic encampments across the Danube certainly date from this epoch. After Italy the Balkan peninsula was abandoned by the empire under this disgraceful emperor. In Asia Chosroes constituted himself the avenger of his "father" Maurice; himself an exarch of the imperial power, having enlisted the goodwill of many Christians by his offerings to the saints, he easily reached the sea; soon there was the terrible and unprecedented sight of the Persians at Chalcedon, facing Constantinople whose environs were infested by their scouts.

During this time Phocas feasted on murders. He put to death the widow of Maurice, his daughters and Germanus, who had organised a revolt for his benefit, bringing into Constantinople by night the Empress Constantina, who represented the blood of Tiberius and Justinian. Philippicus and Commentiolus, the generals of the preceding reign, perished at the hands of the executioner. Savage punishments which the high officials had hitherto been spared were inflicted on the suspects; their tongues were cut, their hands and feet lopped off, they were burnt on ships left to float out

www.dacoromanica.ro

to sea, their eyes were torn out or their backs flayed with whips of cowhide.

The *demes* were wearied of it all. The "Blues" were discontented from the first, but the "Greens" themselves, who had not wished to recognise Constantina, began to agitate; they asked mercy from the "Emperor who loved mankind." Their chiefs also were forced to prostrate themselves, and were threatened with execution. When some new stroke had been struck, the people in the Circus might be heard to mutter, "He is drunk and mad."

(*k*) *Accession of the Emperor Heraclius.*—Soon there was no one to defend the barbarian. His soldiers and accomplices had perished by the swords of the Persians, or had been scattered. The "Greens" had begun to set fire to the city, and Phocas had forbidden them all access to the functions of the State. His very son-in-law, the general Priscus, summoned a pretender from Africa, whence no vessels had come with the customary *annona* into the great famished city since the death of Maurice. In October 610 relief came; the Carthaginian fleet, carrying African and Egyptian soldiers, appeared amidst invocations to the holy images and relics which replaced on the mast-tops the imperial flag. The commnnder was the young Heraclius, son of the prefect of Africa. There was little fighting; the usurper was taken by the chiefs of the *demes* and brought to the ships of Heraclius, who had already received the imperial crown from the hands of the archbishop of Cyzicus. Phocas was abandoned to his fate, which was as cruel as his life. The fragments of his corpse were dragged through the streets or stuck on the head of pikes, to be subsequently burnt under the eyes of the mob. Others suffered the same punishment. The young emperor, who was also a young husband, presided at a representation in the Circus, during which the image of Phocas and the head of Leo the Syrian, his *strategus*, were burnt.

www.dacoromanica.ro

CHAPTER III

NEW ATTEMPT AT RESTORATION BY HERACLIUS (610-649)

(*a*) *The Empire and the Barbarians in the first years of the reign of Heraclius.*—Heraclius (610-641) found the empire ruined. All that had hitherto given it strength had disappeared. The nobility, surrounded by their clients, ceased to be a factor of Byzantine life; the German barbarians no longer flocked to defend the frontiers; the new army of Justinian had failed most lamentably. Thrace belonged to the Avars and Slavs; Asia was invaded by the soldiers of Chosroes, who finally ventured to play his part as a sovereign. He now attacked the towns after having ravaged the country. Apamea, Edessa, Cæsarea in Cappadocia, Damascus, Chalcedon, Jerusalem, where the patriarch Zacharias was captured, soon fell into his hands. Saracen pillagers roamed through the vast gloomy deserts of Syria. Finally Egypt itself, as far as the Ethiopian lowlands, was scoured by the light battalions of the pagan king. In order to propitiate the Avars, Heraclius himself met the Khagan, who had arrived at the Long Walls. No Roman emperor had ever submitted to such a humiliation. The great barbarian leader emphasised it by attacking, immediately after the audience, the imperial camp, and driving before him the unfortunate "master of the world." The great crowd, which had gathered as if for some peaceful festival, saw with horror these hordes rushing on the high girdle of walls when the chief gave the signal by a crack of his whip. Two churches in the suburbs were desecrated and plundered in a few moments. Heraclius, in return, at once sent new envoys to him to ask for mercy. He had recently showered presents on the Persian general who had sailed right into the Bosphorus, and, in order to effect a conciliation, had sent to Chosroes a letter from the senate which explained and humbly excused the accession of Heraclius at the will of the senators.

www.dacoromanica.ro

(*b*) *Wars of Recuperation in Asia against the Persians.*—It was imperative to save some portion at least of this tottering empire, which threatened to collapse. Heraclius decided on a great expedition against the Persians. He formed a treasury with the long accumulated wealth of the churches, and went personally from province to province to collect the soldiers entered on the lists of the *stipendia*, as well as volunteers. He had them well drilled before he placed himself at the head of this quite new army, to which he looked for the salvation of his States. He had the courage to occupy Armenia and to push into Persia, where he routed the enemy. After a winter spent at Constantinople, where the government had been carried on by his eldest son, proclaimed Cæsar, and by the patriarch Sergius, Heraclius returned to Persia and pursued Chosroes himself into the mountains of Media. He passed the winter in Albania, under the pretext of having found an oracle to this effect in the Gospels; he concentrated the contingents from the Caucasus in these winter quarters. Thus a new campaign was skilfully terminated. The Persian territory was again invaded during the winter, and finally in the spring the Byzantine troops crossed the high mountains, still deep in snow, into Mesopotamia. Despatches announcing victory, dated from Amida, reached Constantinople, which had not known, since the time of Theodosius the Great, so great an emperor, one who could win victories by his own exploits.

He halted at Adana. The answer of Chosroes, who also made the most strenuous efforts, was an alliance with the Avars and the Slavs, and the plan of attacking Constantinople. Heraclius went to Lazica to seek an alliance with the Khazar Turks, whose hordes had passed the famous Caspian Gates and entered Persia. The Romans and these remote Barbarians met for the first time, and the thousands of wild horsemen bowed to the earth before the Byzantine deity. Heraclius, to win them over, is said to have placed a golden crown on the head of the Khazar prince, and promised him the hand of his daughter Eudoxia, whose portrait he even showed him. All this time a Persian army was encamped at Chalcedon, where it

www.dacoromanica.ro

even passed the winter, and the Avars were repulsed before Constantinople by the soldiers of the young Cæsar, by the *pallicares* of their suite, the *cavallarii*, the sailors, the Armenians of the Blachernes, the artisans and the mob of the capital. This siege was doubtless one of the most dangerous which this city had to face; the Khagan haughtily demanded the surrender of the city with all its riches; he had come with a strong following, and a very large fleet of Slavonic vessels supported his movements. But the Persians did not stir in his behalf, and scarcity of food soon compelled the barbarians to retrace their steps (626). It was without doubt quite as great a victory as the successful offensive policy of the emperor, whose good fortune had inspired the Byzantines with a courage which they would not otherwise have felt.

The following winter saw the indefatigable imperial warrior in front of Nineveh; the tidings of his march seemed a glorious romance to those who heard of it in Europe. The age of Justinian and Belisarius had been far outstripped, at any rate in those districts which had never witnessed such a series of Roman triumphs. Heraclius, on his charger, Phalbas or Derkon, slaughtering the warriors of Asia became a legendary hero such as the empire of the East had not seen since Constantine the Great. The country palaces of the Persian king blazed before his eyes in the nights of December. A rich booty of spices, silk, carpets, and tame animals awaited the Romans in the palace of Dastagerd, where for years Chosroes had fixed his abode; the great Festival of Epiphany was celebrated in the midst of smouldering ruins, which until yesterday had sheltered a brilliant society, and in the devastated gardens to which summer once lent all its charm. Ctesiphon itself was abandoned as was Seleucia, the other capital. The whole reads like a chapter from the life of Alexander the Great, a new vengeance wreaked by Europe upon Asia.

To complete this cycle of unexpected and unparalleled achievements, the Persian army of Chalcedon revolted and deposed the king, while at the other extremity of the immense theatre of war Siroes, son of Chosroes by a former marriage, since a brother born to Sira the Christian was given preference

www.dacoromanica.ro

over him, made terms with Heraclius; he threw his brother into prison where he died of hunger in the treasure chamber.

On the day of Pentecost (628) the congregation assembled in the church of St. Sophia at Constantinople saw an officer of the court mount the tribune of the *ambôn* with a letter from the emperor, which concluded with the joyful news: "The proud Chosroes, the enemy of God, has fallen from his seat." Siroes immediately made peace and withdrew the Persian garrisons from Syria. Heraclius then started for Armenia and returned to Constantinople, where he was welcomed as a divine liberator. It was confidently noted that he returned the seventh year after his start, which ought to be regarded throughout as a Sunday, the day of rest.

There was some truth in this remark, for while the Persian kings were rapidly falling by assassination one after the other, Heraclius went in solemn state to Jerusalem, to restore the patriarch Zacharias and to bring back the wood of the True Cross. He re-entered his capital with extraordinary pomp in a chariot, whose four horses were replaced by elephants.

(*c*) *The European Provinces during the reign of Heraclius.*—Heraclius attached no importance to the event which transpired in what were still called the western provinces of the Empire. He did not even show much gratitude towards that Africa which had been the cradle of his power. He had finally abandoned Thrace to the barbarians of the Danube, for he did not believe, as Maurice did, that there would still be a Western Roman empire, administered from Constantinople. Surrounded by Syrians, as his patriarch Sergius was, he was convinced that the new empire could only be supported by those provinces of Asia, as far as the Euphrates and the Arabian desert, which he had just restored to it.

(*a*) *Religious Policy of Heraclius.*—He showed his independence in the religious policy which he inaugurated after his return from Jerusalem. Counselled by Anastasius, whom he made Patriarch of Antioch, by Sergius who remembered that he had "Jacobite" relations, by a certain Cyrus, Bishop of Phasis, whom he created Patriarch of Alexandria, he changed his views as to the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon and

www.dacoromanica.ro

thought to realise the religious unity of the empire by his decree of *Union*, which recognised in the Christ one only *energy* and one only *will*. This was enough for the monophysites, while the Chalcedonians of Rome and Africa, and even the new Patriarch of Jerusalem never consented to admit this doctrine. But Heraclius did not act without reflection; he knew well that the Nestorians of Mesopotamia had joyfully accepted the Persian dominion; he recalled the riots which had led to the murder of the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, and the flight of the Patriarch of Jerusalem; he was well aware of the hatred of the Jews for the Christians, which had been shown lately when Jewish hands had massacred under the orders of pagan Persians. He hoped to close these religious discords by the Union, just as he had put an end to the calamities of the foreign war by the peace of 628.

CHAPTER IV

DISMEMBERMENT OF THE OLD EMPIRE BY THE ARABS (649-700)

(*a*) *Origins of conquering Islam.*—We shall never know precisely how this ideal of the greatest of the Byzantine Emperors of the seventh century was wrecked. The locust-eating Saracens, the brigands of the desert and paid guardians of the southern frontier, were well-known but little valued at Constantinople. They were despised for their absolute ignorance of all the arts of civilisation, and jests were freely cracked at the expense of the valiant bandits, who were not even able to scale those walls of yellow earth which proved no hindrance to the incursions of the Moors. Among the anxieties of the first period of the reign of Heraclius, one of the least must have been the appearance of a new chief (ἀρχηγός) and false prophet in the midst of the Saracens. This was a certain Mohammed, a camel-driver, who had learnt, among the Jews of the towns and the simple monks of

www.dacoromanica.ro

the convents in Further Syria, some smattering of Judaic monotheism and Christian morality. This Mohammed ben Abdallah, the epileptic camel-driver, husband of the old dame Khadidjah, had found in this semblance of a simple religion with its childish attractions of a paradise of dainty food and pretty women the means of welding the incoherent bands of the Arabs into a nation.

The Romans soon learnt this to their cost. The disturbances on the frontier, on account of the pay due to the Arabs and the evil motives attributed to them, were the prelude to a war which was destined to have incalculable consequences. Abou-bekr, the successor of Mohammed, was the representative of a religion which by its strict monotheism, its dogmatism with regard to the absolute unity of the divinity, was acceptable to the restless Jews and even to those Syrian Monophysites, who were very glad to have something more than the Union of Heraclius, that is to say, entire religious liberty. Each sect, Jew, Jacobite, Nestorian, could for the future live as it wished if it consented to pay, in token of redemption, the tribute of the new masters.

These latter had at first very simple needs, and Omar, the successor of Abou-bekr, wore rags, rode a mule and lived on dates. The empire of the Arabs in its infancy had no officials or dignitaries. Social distinctions did not exist among the Saracens, who were little disposed to recognise such among their subjects. The great land-owners, the scourge of the poor colonists, fled at their approach, and did not consent to live under their impious and degrading yoke. The cultivated land was then divided. As to the new masters, it was not, as with the Germans, a case of old cultivators of the soil beginning their supremacy by the confiscation of a third of the fields. They remained soldiers or settled in the towns as peaceable artisans and enterprising traders, who brought new prosperity to the decayed cities of Syria. Finally the Arabs introduced a fiscal system incomparably simpler and fairer than that of the Romans. From the first they prepared an exact and minute register of "the men, animals, land and trees," a complete *κατάστιχον*.

www.dacoromanica.ro

They demanded from the Christian subject the *kharadj* proportionally to his means and nothing more. The administration of justice became simpler, more expeditious and better adapted to the primitive methods of life among the inhabitants of Syria. They tolerated the Christian ecclesiastical tribunals of every denomination by the side of the tribunals of their own *Cadis*, who judged according to the Koran, the inspired book of Mohammed.

(*b*) *Arab Conquest of Syria.*—What has been said would explain why the Arabs spread as rapidly as fire among dry straw, and how that great tide of conquests flowed which started with the capture of Gaza and the battle near the River Yarmouk and was swelled by the conquest of Jerusalem, Damascus, Antioch, Edessa and Dara and the sudden destruction of the Persian Empire. But there was also another motive for the sudden dejection which overcame Heraclius, and made him view with apparent indifference the failure of his work. *His army had the same inglorious end as the army of Maurice.*

The only great battle was that of the Yarmouk (636). Two Roman armies had combined in order to avenge the defeat of Theodore, the emperor's brother. The general of the one was Baanes, the other was commanded by the *sacellarius* of the empire. The first army, before the battle began, voted the dethronement of the emperor, who, being ill and old, had recently left the town of Edessa whither he had gone to watch the unexpected events in Syria; Baanes was proclaimed in his place. The *sacellarius* then withdrew his troops. The victory of the Arabs ended both the pretensions of the usurper and the Roman dominion in Syria.

The emperor was henceforward powerless. He was too old to form a new army as at the outset. He retained, however, in misfortune all his dignity and forbade his governors to pay money to the Saracens in order to get rid of them. This refusal to give the presents brought on an invasion of Egypt, and there were no longer any means of keeping the invaders out.

www.dacoromanica.ro

The Roman Empire only comprised Asia Minor, the Peninsula of Thrace, Greece and the islands; the province of Carthage was soon to be lost; Dalmatia and the north of Thrace were already Slavonic territory. It may be said therefore that this epoch marked the birth of the Greek Empire. The Roman past became more and more remote, and the name seemed only retained in irony.

www.dacoromanica.ro

BOOK II

The Orthodox Greek Empire of Asia Minor and Thrace

CHAPTER I

FORMATION OF THE "MIDDLE EMPIRE"

(*a*) *The Successors of Heraclius.*—Heraclius died of dropsy at Constantinople. He left two children, neither of whom was summoned to be his true successor. The days of Phocas returned, and Byzantium once more offered to the world the spectacle of the most revolting crimes perpetrated in order to usurp or hold the imperial throne, now humiliated by defeats.

The reigning house was indisputably decadent. The death of Constantine, the successor of Heraclius (641), was ascribed to poison given by his mother-in-law Martina, and the Chalcedonians declared that Sergius the Monothelite, the Patriarch of Constantinople, was her accomplice. Heracleonas, son of Martina, usurped the power. His nephew Constans, son of Constantine, ordered his nose to be cut off, and Martina's tongue was torn out. Constans, who had a reign nearly as long as that of Heraclius (641-668), put his brother Theodosius to death. Constantine, his son (668-685), was compelled at first to share the power with his two younger brothers, but he afterwards mutilated them, by rhinotmesis (the removal of the wall of bone between the two nostrils). Justinian, son of this Constantine (685-695), was an inhuman monster. At the advice of a Persian eunuch and an unfrocked monk, he ordered his own mother to be scourged with rods; he calmly looked on at the agonies of the taxpayers, who were tortured by smoke to confess where their

www.dacoromanica.ro

goods were hid; he is said to have contemplated a Saint Bartholomew's Night, a wholesale massacre of the Constantinopolitans, beginning with the Patriarch; in his turn he ordered noses and tongues to be cut off. When, however, he came back from his exile at Cherson, dragging after him his Khazar family, equal cruelty was shewn; pregnant women were killed in order to destroy their unborn children; the command was repeatedly given to rase to the ground the city of Cherson, which had refused to support his plans of restoration. Political offenders were thrown in sacks into the sea, guests were murdered at the end of the banquets. Justinian "Cut-nose" appeared in the Circus trampling under foot the usurper who had taken his place, while the crowd cheered the chosen of God who had "walked on the serpent and asp, and had crushed the lion and the dragon" (705). The square of the Bous saw not infrequently pyres raised for the bleeding remains of the conquered. The Patriarch Callinicus was blinded; Pope Martin, defender of the Council of Chalcedon, was sent to die on the barren shores of the Black Sea. A long list of imperial personages either brutal or incapable, without counting the usurpers who took refuge behind the walls of convents, lost their eyes or heads as the price of their short-lived glory. One alone, Constans, dared to fight: he is found at the head of the fleet which was defeated by the Arabs at Phenice, and passed seven whole years in Sicily, at Syracuse, where in the midst of pleasures he discharged the mission of defending Africa and the islands against these same enemies.

(*b*) *Decay of Public Spirit.*—Decadence is observable also in the spirit of the Byzantine populace. The old factions of the Circus still existed; Justinian built the "Blues" a club-house of their own; Philippicus the usurper was elated at the victory of the "Greens." But they played a much less important revolutionary or military rôle. The instigators of rioting were now to be found among the dregs of the populace, and they were seen combining with the Jews in order to desecrate the very altar of St. Sophia. The city was able to resist the Arabs for seven years, but it showed

www.dacoromanica.ro

supreme indifference to the emperors; it hailed the victor with acclamations, and dragged to the Bous the corpse of the vanquished. Leontius (695-698) thrust himself on them by means of the prisoners in the gaols, more especially the soldiers, whom he liberated, and the crowd submitted meekly to the command which he issued: "All Christians to St. Sophia!" Soon the savage shout rang through the tiers of seats, "Dig up the bones of Justinian!"

The disputes of the theologians no longer interested this populace. Constans mutilated Maximus, the saint of the Chalcedonians; the council of 289 bishops, convened by Constantine, reinstated the past in its privileges. Another assembly, patronised by Philippicus, recurred to monothelitism. This, however, only caused disturbance among the monks in the convents, who heaped blasphemies or blessings on the emperors, according to the sense in which they understood the word "orthodoxy." It is meantime interesting to prove that some part was played by the Senate which, we may recollect, wrote on a former occasion to the King of Persia to explain the accession of Heraclius. It was the Senate who decided that Heracleonas and his mother should be banished, while it was to the Senate that later the soldiers of the East turned, who asked Constantine to crown his two brothers, so that, they said, the administration of the empire might resemble the Holy Trinity.

(*c*) *Demoralisation of the Army.*—The army of the horsemen of the *themes*, equivalent to the Turkish "Spahis," who owed military service in exchange for the imperial lands of which they had the usufruct, and the infantry of the *catalogi* were incapable of defending the invaded provinces. In return, a portion of the troops revolted, under the command of Valentin, against the usurpation of Martina and her son. Several times the commanders in Armenia declared that the emperor had been deposed and treated with the Arabs. One of the chiefs of that province, a certain Sapor, who had become the Roman Sabarius, went as far as Andrinople, being eager to obtain possession of Constantinople with the title of emperor. The army of Africa revolted on several

www.dacoromanica.ro

occasions and reduced Constantinople to starvation. The soldiers of the East went to Chrysopolis with the avowed purpose of forcing on the emperor his two brothers as colleagues. The troops in Sicily, after the assassination of Constans, who was brained in the baths of Daphne at Syracuse, proclaimed an Armenian Mizizius because they found him pleasant and affable. The soldiers, who had been defeated in Africa, halted in Crete to proclaim an emperor. The fleet sent against Philippicus (711-713) sided with the rebel. On another occasion the mutinous sailors picked up a common tax-gatherer and made him against his will into the unhappy Emperor Theodosius (716-717). It was sometimes necessary to employ against the enemy regiments of raw peasants or expatriated barbarians, such as the Slavs and Bulgars settled in Asia. The Mardaites of Mount Libanus, united with the Christian villagers, rendered far greater service to the emperors than the regular armies, and, when the Byzantines yielded to the demand of the Saracens to dislodge these valuable auxiliaries from their haunts, the loss to the emperor was irreparable.

(*d*) *Character of the Arab attacks.*—It was due to a series of fortunate circumstances that the empire still subsisted. The Saracens, more formidable than the Persians and more mobile, whose simple wants were satisfied anywhere, soon passed the defiles of the Libanus and plunged into the valleys of Asia Minor. Cyprus, Rhodes, whose famed Colossus a Jew of Edessa had bought for old iron, the island of Arados near the Syrian coast, Smyrna, Chalcedon and Cyzicus had Arab garrisons; Constantinople had to endure the long siege. Roman Africa was attacked and finally, under Leontius, received Arab garrisons whom all the efforts of the Byzantines could not dislodge; the very fleet of the Khalifs was seen off the coasts of Sicily, which Constans hurried up to defend. These Arab armies contained also Syrian contingents; they brought with them Jews to buy the spoils, and bishops to negotiate with the Romans; the Greek language was also employed in the administration, and Christian notaries drew up the public documents down

www.dacoromanica.ro

to the reign of Valid (705-715). It was not absolutely a war against the barbarians, and the "Saracens" certainly showed far more regard than the Persians for the lives and property of the vanquished.

Happily for the empire, the Arabs also had great difficulties to surmount. The provincials were not always loyal to them; cases of treachery were not rare, and the secret of the Greek fire, which burnt on the water and could destroy the fleets of the "enemies of Christ," was imparted to the imperialists by a Syrian deserter.

The heresy of the Kharidjites was proof against persecution; the Greek spirit showed itself inventive, subtle and revolutionary in the new and simple religion which it slowly permeated. The succession of the Khalifs was determined solely by the recommendation of the dying ruler and the welcoming shouts of the people; that is to say, it was very uncertain and dangerous for the welfare of the State. Finally, the long-standing jealousy of the provinces could not disappear. Syria hated Persia, and Moaviah, who established the seat of a Khalifate in the imperial style at Damascus and reduced the pay of the soldiers quartered beyond the Euphrates (661), did nothing to soothe these discordant feelings. Persia fought for Ali and against Moaviah. She roused Moukhar as well as another pretender some years after to usurp the power. There were even conflicts between the Arabs of Palestine and Phœnicia and those who surrounded the successor of Mohammed in the Syrian oases. We must finally bear in mind that the Arabs were a nation of traders and not agriculturists like the Persians, and that they were desirous of peace with Byzantium for their commercial interests.

It followed, then, that the conquerors consented to pay the tribute of ducats of Byzantine gold, prisoners and thoroughbred horses; they even ceded, after the death of Yezid (681), part of the revenues of Cyprus, Armenia and Iberia. While Abelmalek fought against his rivals, the countries of the Caucasus actually reverted to the Roman rule. Leo, who set up a new dynasty at Constantinople in 717, was an Eastern prefect, supported by the *strategus* of Armenia. A

www.dacoromanica.ro

Saracen army, which was operating in Asia Minor, allowed him to pursue his objects. Even if Syria, Egypt and Africa were no longer Roman, Asia Minor was not destined to become Moslem under the Arabs.

(*e*) *The Danubian Slavs.* — From time to time the Byzantines ventured on an expedition against the Slavonic raiders on the Danube and in Dalmatia. That race had already settled down and was not as dangerous as formerly. The Avars were much weakened, and we shall hear little more of them. There was some excitement at Constantinople when the news came, under Constantine, that another people of the Steppes, the Bulgars of the Volga, had come into Bessarabia, above the mouths of the Danube. The emperor started himself against these intruders, who were thus penetrating into the modern Dobroudja and rousing the Slavonic villages. But the army, such as it was in the seventh century, was not capable of clearing a province of such bold barbarian invaders. The empire received them. During the first years they remained quiet, being occupied in finding new homes for their Slavonic subjects, and in exploiting and organising their new territory of Mœsia. They even brought back Justinian, who had fled from Cherson, to Constantinople without demanding an exorbitant price for their service. The European frontiers of the empire now terminated at Thessalonica and the Balkans.

CHAPTER II

THE "ISAURIAN" EMPERORS AND THE DISPUTE ABOUT THE SACRED IMAGES (717-867)

(*a*) *Dawn of a new era under Leo the Isaurian.*—The Emperor Leo, founder of a new imperial line, must not be considered as an Asiatic, although he was born in Asia, perhaps of Isaurian parents. The emperors had for some time been accustomed to transport by edict the entire population of one

www.dacoromanica.ro

province into another, for the purposes of the defence of the empire. The parents of Leo thus became inhabitants of Thrace. The zeal he displayed in supplying an army with provisions won him the post of "Spatharius" of the emperor's guard, and he rapidly reached the highest honours.

He was, therefore, a Thracian, like most of his predecessors. All his life long he depended principally on the soldiers of the European *themes* and on the Thrakesioi; and, when his son-in-law Artavasde fought for the crown against Constantine, the son of Leo, this latter found his supporters among these very soldiers, while the Armenian troops favoured the opposition-emperor, their own countryman.

The reign of Leo is not isolated. It is impossible to detach it from all the subsequent reigns down to the beginning of the ninth century and the era of the great wars on the Danube, which were stirred up by the Bulgars. This chapter of Byzantine history covers not less than a hundred years. It is without doubt far more brilliant than that which preceded it, and among the list of emperors who succeeded to the throne during the period there were certainly men of no ordinary energy and capacity as rulers. The writers, who weigh everything in the scales of orthodoxy, have, it is true, savagely attacked these heretics who dared to lay hands on the sacred images and abolish their worship. But it is easy, by a comparison with the seventh and the tenth centuries, to form some true notion of the importance of these restorers of the empire.

The efforts of the new dynasty were aided by the rapid decadence of the enemies which the empire hitherto had dreaded. It was long since the Byzantines had been surrounded by such feeble neighbours or since their frontiers had been so secure.

(*b*) *Relations of the New Dynasty with the Arabs.*—The principal danger hitherto had appeared in Asia, from the Arabs. Leo himself assumed the power at the moment when the great Saracen forces, on sea and land, were bearing down on Constantinople itself. But the Greek fire soon accounted for the fine Syrian and Egyptian fleet; the three months of

www.dacoromanica.ro

snow, which that winter brought, struck fear into the lightly-clad soldiers of the desert; finally the death of Khalif Soliman put an end to these ambitious dreams of conquest, whose hour had long gone by. Constantinople never saw again the holy banners and crested masts of the Arabs.

All the same, the attacks of the Syrian armies continued; generals, even the sons of Emirs, often commanded *κούρσοι* or raids in 'Romania,' which meant at that day Asia Minor. Several thousand pillagers were for months ravaging Cappadocia and Paphlagonia; the towns themselves were besieged, and temporary mosques were built in any important place which the unexpected attack of the warriors of the Khalif had won. Armenia was often similarly overrun. The Arabs even tried on one occasion to invent a pretender to the Byzantine throne, the pseudo-Tiberius, whom they carried about with them through Syria, waiting the time when they could make use of him elsewhere. An unsuccessful attack was made on the island of Crete. Even the market towns of Asia Minor were now able to repulse the roving bands of the Emirs.

In the first place, the Arabs had still their rivals in the Steppe, the Khazar Turks, with whom the emperor maintained the most friendly relations. Constantine, the son of Leo, had married a daughter of their Khagan. Secondly, there had long been a slow growth of parasitic offshoots on the solid stem of Islam, and the heretics of the new religion did not yield in obstinacy and fanatical propagandism to the heretics of the ancient Christian law. The *Hierakites* burnt Damascus, the pagans of Harran resisted every effort, certain Persian Musulmans thought to find salvation by throwing themselves down from the ramparts, others were awaiting the coming of a Messiah of their own race, borrowing their national ideal from the Jews. Finally, the antagonism between the provinces of the Khalifate had become so acute that the dissolution of the empire seemed inevitable. The Arab *strategus* of Armenia, recognised by the Mesopotamians, ventured to fight the Emir who had been recognised in turn by Syria, Egypt and Persia. A few years later, Mervan,

www.dacoromanica.ro

harassed by the revolt of the towns in Syria, dismantled them all, only leaving standing the walls of Antioch, behind which he wished to shelter himself. Persia soon rose against him with her sectaries, who fought in the name of Ali, the martyr son-in-law of the Prophet, against the unlawful usurper, the criminal offspring of the Khalifs, who had taken the blood-stained seat of the hero. The "black bands" of Khorassan did not relax their efforts until they had put an end to the reign and life of Mervan. The new dynasty of Aboul-Abbas, the Abbassids (750), effected a more or less marked division of the empire. Whilst a refugee of the defeated dynasty of the Ommeyads founded in Spain a separatist Khalifate, which boasted its legitimist origin, Egypt and Syria adopted an independent attitude towards the new Khalifs in Persia, who were possibly more Persian than Moslem. It must further be noticed that, with an Arab empire, whose centre was beyond the Euphrates, Byzantium had far less to fear than when the masters of Damascus felt a continual temptation to cross into Asia Minor and obtain for themselves the most beautiful capital of the world, Constantinople.

The Christians of Syria had little cause to be content with the dominion of the Infidels. Even the Ommeyads had not spared them. We have only to consider that for forty years they were not allowed to elect a patriarch of Antioch, and in the end they had one thrust on them! The Christian prisoners, under Hescham, had to choose between proselytism and death. The Metropolitan of Damascus had his tongue cut out because he had dared to preach against Islam. A dying man, who had condemned the religion of Mohammed, was thought to have deserved assassination. The Greek secretaries were deprived of their public offices. An Emir entered the church during the commemoration of the festival of Easter and threatened the officiating prelate. The Musulmans were already charged with breaking the promise of tolerance which they gave in the hour of conquest. The Abbassids forbade new churches to be built, or crosses to be exhibited, or Greek literature to be taught; they sealed up the treasures of the churches and levied contributions from

www.dacoromanica.ro

the clergy ; Jews bought up the property of famous churches. Cases of desertion were not rare, and at the time of the siege of Constantinople the African Christians left the ships of their masters in a body. The inhabitants of Mount Libanus and their neighbours waged a desperate war in their impregnable fastnesses.

(*c*) *The long reign of Constantine V. : Campaigns in Asia.*—Leo had already gained several victories over the Saracens who had come into Asia Minor. His son, Constantine (741-775), was a capable general. During his reign of more than thirty years he always watched for the favourable moment to attack them. He once subjugated Armenia by capturing its fortresses. Ordinarily he restricted himself to bringing with him thousands of Syrian Christians, in order to plant them in Thrace or at Constantinople. Whether they were Jacobites, Manicheans, or Paulicians, who believed in Satan as much as in God Himself, and employed for the purification of their souls the fasts enjoined by the Church no less than the orgies of the sects, was a matter of little interest to him.

(*d*) *War on the Danube.*—On the Danube side the Avars were no longer a power, and the Slavs of Mœsia lived under the yoke of the Bulgars, whose name they soon adopted. These Bulgars were not numerous, and they never showed the savage energy of the Avars. Their military importance begins rather at the moment when they partially appropriated the heritage of the Byzantines. Under Constantine the Bulgars imperiously demanded the renewal of the old frontier treaties, with the object of being confirmed in the possession of the cities and market towns of Upper Mœsia, which they had gradually annexed. The emperor did not feel bound to satisfy such insolent claims. A Bulgarian attack on Constantinople was easily repulsed, and Constantine won a victory at Anchialos. Adopting in the Balkans the ordinary system of colonisation in Asia, he planted in Thrace whole villages of those Slavs who had submitted to his authority. Two rivals claimants to the throne of the barbarians in Mœsia, both of whom however bore names borrowed from the

www.dacoromanica.ro

Roman population of that province, Sabinus and Paganus (Baïan ?) soon came before the emperor to accept his decision (764). The Byzantine expeditions into Bulgaria did not stop at this point. Notwithstanding the eventual losses sustained by the fleet and the pacific agreements concluded with the defeated side, the Byzantine armies obtained some marked successes. The Byzantine court gave asylum to a fugitive κύριος or lord of the Bulgars, and on two occasions Constantine celebrated in his capital brilliant triumphs over this nation. He died, at an advanced age, during a new campaign in these parts. There as elsewhere his death (775) was the signal for a rapid decadence.

(*e*) *The new Byzantine army.*—The army which Leo and Constantine V. employed was the natural result of the new state of things. At Constantinople itself there was a completely Grecised guard of *spatharii* and *stratores*. In the provinces, now called *themes*, and organised especially from a military point of view, there were to be found at first the owners of knightly fiefs, the καβαλλάριοι, who answered the call of the emperor with a retinue of squires and men-at-arms proportionate to their wealth. The infantry was composed of soldiers from the register, the *catalogos*, which was always kept to date. The troops were employed ordinarily in their province only; they protested against any general expedition of all the *themes*. There were the *Thrakesioi*, originally soldiers from Thrace, the *Opsikioi* from Nicea, the *Anatolikoi* or warriors of the East from Asia Minor, the *Kibyraiotikoi*, the *Bukellarioi*, the *Helladikoi* from Greece and the islands, and finally the *Armeniakoi*, guardians of the Eastern frontier. The Sicilians were never called in, nor the other Italians, whose mission it was to fight daily in different localities against the Lombards. The pay was called *roga*, and all the troops were assembled every year to receive it, most frequently from the emperor's own hands. They came also without any military equipment and in such disorder, that on two occasions the Bulgarians and Arabs were seen to rush on this defenceless mob and appropriate the fine gold pieces stamped with the emperor's portrait. Discipline was maintained by the lash, and often

www.dacoromanica.ro

those who were flogged had, according to the new system of punishment, their beard, moustache, hair and even eyebrows shaved off—*δείρειν καὶ κείρειν*.

At the beginning of Leo's reign there was a revolt in Sicily, which proclaimed Tiberius emperor. Thessalonica called in the Bulgars and declared in favour of Arthemius. The islands and Greece wished to put Cosmas on the throne. Constantine V. fought for many months against his brother-in-law Artavasde. The "lords of the themes" asked Leo IV. to crown his son Constantine. Thus the new army was not always a support for its chief. For this reason Constantine V. took pains to concentrate at Constantinople those regiments which he thought he could employ against all his enemies; he attached them closely to his person and loaded them with gifts. Since the government of the *demes* was a thing of the past, and the populace of Constantinople lived a torpid existence, taking the political phases and crimes as the natural complement of the games in the Circus, this garrison of the capital became the principal force, the only formidable factor in the life of the empire.

(*f*) *Origin and development of Iconoclasm.*—Leo and Constantine employed Iconoclasm to accomplish a revolution which, under a mask of religion, concealed motives of a very different kind. The Eastern Church had become very wealthy by a long series of gifts, and there were far more gold, silver and precious stones in the coffers of the chief sanctuaries than in the treasury of the emperors, which was thought to be inexhaustible and capable of corrupting all the barbarian world. Again, the monks had regular fortresses at Constantinople, in the great convents of Stoudion, of the Dalmatians, Callistratoi, Dios and of Maximin; some of them could house seven hundred monks, popular preachers who were vigorous combatants and had instigated many a disturbance. The patriarchs, the bishops and the legions of monks had become a real danger to the secular authority represented by the emperor. To restore to society, that is to say to the thin ranks of the tax-payers and soldiers, these monastic deserters, whose numbers continually increased owing to the disasters

www.dacoromanica.ro

which struck the empire under the terrifying influence of comets, earthquakes and fires; to consecrate to the war of liberation all the useless gold which glittered in the recesses of the churches; to subject to the taxing and even the administration of the imperial officials the vast patrimony of the Church, that property held in mortmain and immune from the tribute of gold or blood—that was a programme which might well tempt the ambition of men so wildly energetic, so devoid of superstition as Leo and Constantine V. Some legitimate pretext was required for so bold a task, involving such great risks. This was the period when the Khalifs were persecuting those Syrian Christians, whom they considered idolaters for having their saints painted on panels; Yezid had strictly prohibited this worship of icons. Many Syrian Christians whom their monophysitism brought into near relation with Islam, Semites inclined to abstract conceptions by the spirit of their race, semi-barbarians incapable of appreciating the place filled by art, seem to have accepted this measure with little regret. Leo was himself surrounded with Syrians, who advised him on his part to undertake that work of purification which might spare the Christians the reproach of having followed the example of the heathen in worshipping idols.

Leo thought that he might accomplish this radical reform with the aid of his soldiers in Constantinople. His first step was a decree which only forbade the adoration of the images preserved as ornaments (726). The images were removed first from the public buildings, the squares and walls. The people showed little excitement; there were only trifling disturbances when the image which adorned the brazen gate was lowered in an ignominious way. Some time afterwards the inhabitants of the town willingly took upon themselves the task of destroying the images, on which they heaped insults; it seemed as if the days had come back when the world was furious against the remnants of the banished paganism. The relics shared the same fate. The work begun by Leo was consummated by Constantine, who convened a great council of 348 bishops at Constantinople to condemn the heresy of

www.dacoromanica.ro

the icons. Even if the patriarchs of Syria and Egypt remained faithful to the worship of images, the iconoclast or image-breaking emperors found patriarchs of Constantinople to suit them, such as Anastasius or Constantine, the latter of whom his imperial namesake personally presented to the populace towards the close of the Reforming Synod, shouting from the top of the *ambôn*, where they appeared together holding each other's hands: "Long life to Constantine, the ecumenical patriarch!" It must be noticed also that, while John Chrysorrhoas of Damascus was becoming famous by his polemic against iconoclasm, Theodore, Patriarch of Antioch, had no scruples in transmitting news concerning his masters, the Arabs, to this Byzantine emperor, the head of a blasphemous and sacrilegious heresy. In his campaigns against the Arabs Constantine was none the worse received or served for this. The strong feeling against him who, condemned from his cradle for having befouled the baptismal font (hence his nickname, Copronymus), only took the mild form of pamphlets and historical protests in the *chronographs*. The masses of the people never raised the standard of revolt against him anywhere.

The wide scope of the imperial projects was soon apparent. The monks were deprived of their right to teach, and Constantine V. betrothed a son to Irene, an Athenian. The convents were emptied by force and were used as barracks for privileged soldiers. Those who went about preaching the cloistered life and criticising the emperor were put to death. The vanquished, the disappointed politicians, State criminals and detected intriguers were forbidden to seek refuge in the monasteries. The provincial officers who showed zeal used to collect in some field near the town the monks and nuns and compel them to marry each other before the eyes of the people, who never thought of interfering. They appeared holding each other's hands in the representations in the Circus, which gained a new type of comedy, the hypocrite monk, forced to return to the pleasures and the duties of the world. There was not any respect shown now to the authority of the patriarch. Anastasius was blinded

www.dacoromanica.ro

and then recalled to his throne. The Constantine who had been proclaimed by the emperor himself was sentenced to hear the list of his misdeeds read out in St. Sophia and to be struck in the face, once for each sin. He was scourged, shorn, shaven, cursed, rebaptised under the name of Skotiopsis, seated backwards on an ass and paraded through the Circus, and exiled; finally they cut off his head, which was exposed to view for several days hanging by the ears, while his body was thrown into the sewers. Things went so far that the very invocation of the saints was prohibited.

(*g*) *Revival of the Ancient Orthodoxy after the Death of Constantine: Part played by the Empress Irene.*—Some clever members of the monastic class roused reaction after the death of Constantine. Certain circumstances favoured them. Leo, the son of Constantine, had a short life (†780). He left the power to his widow Irene and a son, hardly ten years old, the new Constantine; the Senate proclaimed the reign of "Constantine and Irene;" the empress substituted the title "Irene and Constantine." She wished to be sole ruler. Then her son, when he reached the age of twenty, had the same ambition. On both sides oaths of allegiance, well paid for, but badly kept, were required from the veterans of Constantine, whom Irene finally succeeded by a stratagem in removing from the capital which they had so long guarded. The eunuchs Staurakios and Aëtius, the favourite counsellors of the empress, who also entertained imperial ambitions for themselves or their relations, interfered in and embittered the quarrel. Revolts in favour of other candidates broke out in Sicily and even at Constantinople. The Armenians revolted and were dispersed through the provinces, their foreheads henceforth branded with the inscription in black ink, "Armenian rebel." Irene at first ventured on a crime hitherto unprecedented even at Constantinople: she blinded her own son. He did not die, however, and had his mother imprisoned; she escaped from her prison and once more burnt the eyes of the miserable youth, who died from the torture (797). Revolts broke out afresh and soon the guilty mother went to Lesbos,

www.dacoromanica.ro

where she died at the moment when she was negotiating with the Frankish ambassadors about her marriage with Charlemagne, whose daughter had been for several years betrothed to her late son. The patrician and *logothetes* Nicephorus had usurped the power rightfully belonging to the sons of Constantine V., who were also blinded (802).

In order to conciliate a class which down to the last had considerable power, Irene nominated the patriarch Paul, who was disposed to re-establish the worship of images. The Pope Gregory had broken with Constantinople during the persecutions, and with more or less effect had forbidden orthodox Italians to have any dealings with heretical Constantinople. Pope Adrian now warmly praised the efforts at reconciliation of Paul and his successor. A great Ecumenical Council assembled at Constantinople; the Patriarch of Jerusalem alone was missing. The soldiers broke up the assembly, but it presently met again at Nicea (787). The result was announced even in the capital; it condemned the religious policy of Leo and his dynasty. In order to win over the inhabitants of Constantinople, who were still grateful to Constantine, that prince so liberal and punctual in all matters concerning the *annona*, that glorious victor over the Bulgars, whom they believed they would see rise one day, in the hour of great disaster, from his tomb in the Church of the Holy Apostles to ride to the help of the empire, Irene exempted them from taxation and even from part of the custom-tolls. Neither these concessions nor her crimes saved her.

www.dacoromanica.ro

CHAPTER III

PACIFICATION OF THE RELIGIOUS DISPUTES—RECONCILIATION WITH THE BAPTISED BULGARS (787-867 A.D.)

(*a*) *The New Warrior-Emperor Nicephorus.*—It is necessary to form a high idea of the new emperor, Nicephorus, since he himself had a high idea of his power, which he declared he did not wish to subordinate to anyone, provided that the welfare of the empire was his aim. He was a fiscal reformer, instituted a new conscription, abolished all exemptions, made even the property of the clergy, which he sometimes administered himself, liable to the tribute called καπνικόν, carefully checked the movements of the national wealth, prosecuted the retainers of treasure-trove, distributed at a fixed price the uninhabited districts in order to increase the number of agriculturists, supplied sailors with loans of money for the repair of their vessels, and prohibited usury. He to some extent revived the iconoclastic tradition, nominated, contrary to the wishes of the monks, a patriarch from the ranks of the laity in the person of his namesake the chronicler Nicephorus, treated the Paulicians of Thrace with tolerance, and assigned the monasteries to the soldiers. After having crushed the revolt of Arsabir, he turned his attention to the defence of the empire, which this series of internal disturbances had reduced to the state in which Leo had found it a century before.

Charlemagne, since that Christmas Day, 800 A.D., when the Pope, while crowning him at St. Peter's in Rome, pronounced the Latin formula with which the ancient emperors of the West were greeted, was the head of these Western provinces. Rome was as Frankish as she had hitherto been Byzantine. The Lombard heritage, so coveted by Byzantium, was about to fall to her.

The Arabs awoke to conquests under the great Haroun-al-Raschid, the Charlemagne of Asia, the first emperor among

www.dacoromanica.ro

the Khalifs. Cyprus and Rhodes were conquered in spite of the tribute which the imperialists offered for the first time. Nicephorus was too weak to attempt to reconquer that which had been lost, and the partial successes of his general Bardanios (Vartan), surnamed "the Turk," at the head of five *themes*, had no other result beyond the proclamation of "the Turk" by the soldiers whom he had gorged with his booty; the rebel was betrayed by his comrades and forced to seek shelter in a cloister, in the rigours of which he delighted as an assured refuge for his conquered pride.

(*b*) *Death of Nicephorus in a battle against the Bulgars.*— He had no longer the splendid army of Leo and Constantine which, having been persecuted during the late disturbances, had crumbled away. Nicephorus had to summon all the *themes* against the Bulgars, who had found in Croum a leader of the first rank and had occupied Sardica, or Sophia, after a great battle. It was necessary, in order to meet him in the field, to have recourse to bands of armed peasants, for the soldiers mutinied, and to increase the taxes and raise them for several years in advance. Nicephorus, though neither a soldier nor a young man, fought two campaigns against the Bulgars. He was victorious in the second, and even burnt the palace of Croum, but in the end fell into an ambuscade. His skull became the drinking-cup of the barbarian prince.

(*c*) *Successors of Nicephorus.* — Michael, his successor, brother-in-law of Staurakios, the son and successor of Nicephorus, also wounded in that fatal war, could not hold his own at a critical moment, when Croum captured Mesembria and Andrinople, and proceeded to besiege Constantinople. The throne was given to an Armenian officer who bore a name of good omen—Leo (813).

Unfortunately very little is known about the seven years of Leo's reign. Since he persecuted the worshippers of the holy images and thus severed himself from the orthodoxy which had just celebrated its great triumphs, those who were concerned in the question did not forget to state in their polemical writings the acts of treachery towards his predecessors of which the new emperor was said to have been

www.dacoromanica.ro

guilty, as well as the crimes committed during a reign in which he gave way to his gloomy and cruel temperament. We must bear in mind, however, that, after him, there was nothing more to fear from the side of the Bulgars. Croum, who had demanded the restitution of the deserters, had appeared under the walls of Constantinople and had ravaged all the provinces of Europe as far as the Wall of Heximilion which shut in the Peloponnesus; he was, however, beaten once near Mesembria, and he saw his country terribly ravaged by the imperial troops; finally all the forces of the Khan of the pagans were destroyed in the great battle which gave the name Lion's Mount (*βουνὸς λέοντος*) to the scene of the Byzantine victory. It is also known that Leo, in spite of the malignity of his religious opponents, never rested during his reign, but was for ever inspecting an army, which he had completely reorganised, and raising fortifications to defend the roads which the barbarians knew and employed. The Armenian was also a prince who upheld old traditions, for henceforward we see the Senate often consulted by the emperors, who were bound to respect its opinions and its feelings. Free from any greedy motives or base passions, he chose his ministers wisely, and his judgment in the Lausiakon remained famous. If he condemned the worship of the icons and sent the Patriarch Nicephorus into exile, he took no further action against the venerated prelate. He was thus regretted even by his foes when he succumbed to a palace revolt, being struck down while fighting by mean assassins who followed him into the chapel of the palace and dragged the mutilated corpse into the Circus, to show it to the populace, which gloated over such sights (820 A.D.)

(*d*) *Michael the Stammerer and the Revolt of Asia.*—His policy was in substance adopted by his successor, Michael the Stammerer, an officer and comrade of Leo who had fallen into disfavour; he was dragged from prison and proclaimed emperor, with the fetters still on his feet. Native of Amorion, a large town of Asia, where there were numerous Jews and Gypsies, an ex-shepherd, uneducated, obstinately clinging to strange and vague religious prejudices, he did not restore to

www.dacoromanica.ro

the orthodox the privileges of which Leo was the first to rob them. But the Stammerer had not the ability of his predecessors, and fortune persistently refused to smile on him. Although he contrived to secure the loyalty of the officers of the army and the nobles of the Senate, the provinces slipped out of his hands from revolt, not from invasion. The Arabs of Spain, who scoured the seas in search of adventures, made a descent on Crete and refused to leave it; the twenty-nine cities and towns of that large island were forced to recognise the new rule, and the Bishop of Gortyna, who refused to do so, was murdered. Many of the adjoining islands fell into the power of these daring corsairs; the fleet sent against them met with a defeat, and the Arabs pursued to the island of Cos the fugitive commander, whom they crucified. Euphemius, one of the rebels, called the Africans into Sicily, and there again it was impossible to dislodge the Musulmans, who even seized several ports on the mainland opposite. The inhabitants of Dalmatia, who could not receive any help from Constantinople, while the Frankish officers on the other bank lost no opportunity of winning them over, chose governors who were independent of the emperor. There had long been a similar political situation at Cherson in the Crimea, in the vicinity of the great Khazar empire of the Steppe.

The greatest menace to the government of Michael the Stammerer was the general revolt of Asia, which had for years felt itself unduly neglected, and resented any contribution to the enormous expenses of the court at Constantinople without receiving anything in exchange. A certain Thomas, an old officer of dubious extraction but proved bravery, and lame, passed himself off as Constantine, the son of Leo and Irene, who had been dead for years. Relying on his assumed claims to the empire he won over, even during Leo's reign, *theme* after *theme* and all the towns; he made himself master of the fleet sent against him, and assigned it headquarters in the Lesbian waters, which were under his control. Having been crowned by the Patriarch of Antioch, he chose successively two Cæsars to aid him in his war against the other Emperor of Byzantium. He appeared under the walls of the

www.dacoromanica.ro

capital at the head of an imposing army, having a large number of well equipped vessels at his disposition. When he lost these, another flotilla, which was waiting on the shores of Greece, came to take part in the siege. The hostilities of the rebels against Constantinople lasted no less than three years. Michael was driven to call to his aid the Bulgars, who by their inevitable victory ended the ambitious career of Thomas. He was besieged in Arcadiople, and the rival emperor, having taken him through treachery, put him to death in an ignominious fashion. Thanks to the assistance of the Khan Mortagon, Michael was able to finish his days in peace at Constantinople, where the body of the former herdsman was solemnly laid in the Church of the Holy Apostles, in the very tomb of the great Justinian (829).

(*e*) *Theophilus a Peace-loving Emperor.*—Theophilus, son and successor of Michael, not only was more careful than any other emperor to uphold the imperial dignity, but was fully conscious of the high responsibilities which it imposed. Constantinople once more had an energetic, just and inexorable judge, who began by the stern punishment of the assassins of Leo the Armenian, although he owed his crown to them. Every week he rode in great ceremony to the Church of the Blachernes, in order to be accessible to any who wished to put their grievances before him. He personally verified in the public markets the price and quality of the goods, and went so far as to make inquiry into every sort of merchandise. He forbade the effeminate extravagance of long hair falling on the shoulders. A vessel which came laden with products which the empress herself was accustomed to sell, for the benefit of her private purse, was burnt by the order of the emperor. Always zealous of the prestige of the empire, he entrusted his ambassadors with costly objects and pieces of gold, which they were ordered to lavish on all comers, to show that their master attached no value to such things, since the resources of the empire were, now as ever, unlimited. A group of new palaces of unprecedented magnificence, the "imperial houses" of Bryas in the Arabic style, of Karianon, of Triconchos, of Sigma and Tetraseron, rose on the shore

www.dacoromanica.ro

of the blue sea with their marble walls and roofs of gold and silver. The artistic age of Justinian seemed to have returned. And, in spite of all, a rich treasury, such as the empire had not possessed for years, was left to his successor.

Notwithstanding the spiteful accounts given by the ecclesiastical writers, who wished to avenge the insults, the witticisms, the persecutions and mutilations of the monks who defended the images, he was no despicable general. His father had extreme difficulty in getting rid of the Asiatic rebels; he, Theophilus, whom the Bulgars did not venture to attack, had the courage to pursue the bands of Saracen pillagers who infested Asia Minor with their incessant *razzias*. He established at Sinope a permanent camp of Persians who had come to put themselves under his protection, and Theophobos, one of their chiefs, a personage of royal blood and husband of the empress's sister, was his general against the followers of the Mesopotamian Emir. The emperor, defeated sometimes but victorious in the next campaign, never wearied of this dangerous warfare in Asia, which he wished to conduct personally. He destroyed Sozopetra in Syria because that town was the country of the "Emir," the Khalif Motassem, and it was only through treachery that the latter took his revenge by sacking Amorion, the cradle of the imperial dynasty, for the place was strongly garrisoned. He did his best to check the invasions of the Cretans, whom their light craft brought unexpectedly on the coasts of Thrace. He even interfered with armed force in the affairs of the Franks by sending his mercenaries and the soldiers of the *themes* into "Longibardia," that is, into Italy, and after the disaster at Amorion he demanded the help of these same Franks against the pagans of Asia.

(*f*) *A Regency and a Fainéant Emperor.*—He died in 842 from the fatigues of campaigning. He left daughters and one son under the guardianship of the Empress Theodora, of Bardas, a Paphlagonian, brother of that princess, and of two officers, Theoctistos, an upright and respected man, and Manuel, who had distinguished himself by playing a prominent part in the Persian War. Bardas was the true

www.dacoromanica.ro

master of the empire, both before and after his proclamation as Cæsar. A worthy successor of the enlightened Theophilus, he founded a school of mathematics in the palace of Magnaura, and although he re-established the orthodoxy which the regent empress had always observed, Bardas entrusted the management of the question to the former iconoclast archbishop of Thessalonica, Leo, a man of world-wide reputation. He was an upright judge like Leo and Theophilus. Even though he compelled the patriarch Ignatius, a scion of the ancient dynasties, to abdicate and imprisoned him, and then scourged and tortured him, the Cæsar afterwards nominated as head of the Greek Church Photius, who was no less distinguished by his birth, his family being a branch of the imperial stock, than by his vast learning, his poetical and musical ability, his philosophic subtlety, and finally by his courage in the cause of dogmatic truth.

(*g*) *Baptism of the Bulgarian Khan.*—The Bulgars remained quiet under his rule, and their Khan Boris, worked upon by the influence of a captive Greek monk, and by that of his sister, who had long been detained at Constantinople, actually consented to become Christian, following the example of the Slavonic chiefs of the Moravian kingdom.

Thus the exodus of *iconodule* monks, formerly persecuted by the government, was fraught with great consequences for the expansion of the Greek faith; the Moravians were converted by two brothers, henceforward famous, Cyril and Methodus, sons of an officer of Thessalonica, a Greek town in a mainly Slavonic country. These Greek preachers are not responsible if in the inevitable course of things the Slavonic liturgy won its way among peoples recently converted to Byzantine civilisation, and if this fact heralded in the East the dawn of a new Slavonic civilisation for the Slavs themselves, for those Bulgars of the Volga who ruled over Slavs, and even for the population of Roman stock on the banks of the Danube. It was the concurrence of the Roman Church, always very tolerant in the matter of the liturgical languages of the East, which insured that a Slavonic element should develop among the new Churches. Byzantium was

www.dacoromanica.ro

compelled to concede that which her rival Rome had long ago granted.

Bogor, or Boris, the Bulgarian prince, had at the time of a famine tested for the first time the efficacy of prayers addressed to the God of the Christians, and did not fail to ask, in return for his conversion, a gift as important as the Zagora, the country comprised between Sidera and Debeltos. His people, that is to say the Bulgarian court, for the Slavonic subjects had certainly long been Christians, were compelled to follow their prince into the baptistery, and a Greek bishop was the first religious head recognised by the country of the Bulgars. A permanent peace was at the same time concluded with the empire, which was now harassed only by Saracen corsairs or Cretan pirates. The Musulmans of the Euphrates were, however, defeated by Patronas, brother of the regent, the Emir of Melitene was killed, and his son fell into the power of the imperial forces.

(*b*) *Conspiracies against the Emperor Michael III.*— Bardas wished to put an end to these annoyances by a naval expedition on a large scale. He proposed to take with him on that campaign the young emperor Michael, his ward, who devoted his time to the games in the Circus and to coarsest and most indecent popular farces; he insulted by such conduct both the dignity of his people and the prestige of the Church, for he used to parade through the streets of Constantinople, travestying the religious processions, with a sham patriarch and comic priests. Bardas was cruel; he had killed Theoctistos and banished from the Court the empress, whom he interned in a convent. The libertine who wore the crown hated and suspected him, and got rid of him by assassination.

Basil, a Macedonian officer, who had poisoned the relations between Michael and Bardas, and had even undertaken the task of successfully carrying out the conspiracy against the latter, became Cæsar with all the customary forms and ceremonial. But the cynical Michael soon, in jest, during a private dinner, at which, it is true he was alone with the empress and his colleague, threw the same purple mantle

www.dacoromanica.ro

over the shoulders of a boatman who had praised his skill in the Circus. Basil, who did not understand the language and treatment, spread the report of a decree of the Senate against the shameless emperor, and put him to death. Without any unnecessary cruelty, deliberately as if carrying out the sentence of the law of the country, having skilfully planned all the acts in the drama, he put an end to the young monster, whom he had purposely intoxicated. He became emperor himself on September 23rd, 867.

www.dacoromanica.ro

BOOK III

The New Work of Byzantine Revival in the Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

CHAPTER I

EARLY HISTORY OF THE MACEDONIAN DYNASTY DOWN TO THE GREAT WARS OF BASIL II. (867-976) — BATTLES AGAINST THE ARABS AND BULGARS FOR THE SAFETY OF THE FRONTIERS AND COASTS—BYZANTIUM RECOVERS THE MASTERY AT SEA

(*a*) *A great Imperial Personality: Basil I.*—Basil I. was a second Theophilus in his rule, but with superior capacity as a soldier, better fortune and unwavering loyalty to the orthodox faith. This son of Thracian peasants, descendants of an ancient colony of Armenians, was not only an able judge who daily heard complainants before his supreme court of the Genikon, and a great builder of palaces and monasteries, but he left a glorious name as the protector of the poor, the humble and the unfortunate. He entertained at his own cost the honest country-folk who came to make a last appeal to his justice; he put the law within the reach of every individual by repealing all the clearly obsolete enactments contained in the earlier statute-books, and by dividing the remains of the old *Jus Romanum* into practical sections (*Procheiros* and *Epanagoge*, or *Basilika*, 887-893). He instituted a new system on which his tax-gatherers were to draw up their lists so that the tax-payer might at once check the amount at which he was assessed; he emphatically prohibited any of those general revisions of the fiefs and lands granted to private individuals, which were especially intended to swell the imperial coffers

www.dacoromanica.ro

by spoliations or judicial measures, more harsh than legal. It is very possible that he would have gladly spared, from dynastic motives, those great proprietors who devoured crumb by crumb the lands of their poorer neighbours.

(*b*) *The Schism of Photius.*—His sense of justice, as well as his religious zeal, prompted him to terminate equitably at a solemn synod the long standing controversy between the patriarch Ignatius, deposed by the capricious Michael and the unrelenting Bardas, and Photius, the young imperial secretary, the brilliant cleric, poet, orator and philosopher, whom the favour of the Cæsar had promoted in the course of a few days from one step to another in the hierarchy, and had finally crowned with the mitre of the patriarch. The Roman Church had been consulted on this quarrel; the pope at that time was Nicholas, the arbiter of the disputes between the Frankish kings, the true creator and the vigorous defender through the "False Decretals," of the theory of a sovereign pontiff, the master of the world, who held in his imperial hand the two swords of power over men; Rome therefore did not hesitate to pronounce judgment. Photius, on the other side, was too proud of his birth, his learning and his abilities, too imbued with the conviction of Byzantine superiority over the barbarians of "Longibardia," and their bishop who was subservient to the Franks, to think of giving way. His ingenious mind looked for the joints in the harness of the clergy of Ancient Rome, and he had little difficulty in proving that the *Filioque* of the Creed according to which the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father, was only a late interpolation of the Spaniards. He was then able to excommunicate as heretics the persons who had excommunicated him as usurper.

Basil had no wish to carry the dispute too far in order to support the non-canonical patriarch. If he did not submit to the pope in the matter of the patriarchal dependence of the new Bulgarian Church, on which he imposed an archbishop and Oriental bishops, he was willing to maintain friendly relations in other respects with the Holy See. While he continued the persecution of these Asiatic Paulicians, who

www.dacoromanica.ro

were decried as Manicheans and suspected of intrigues with the Arabs, he did not declare war with "Ancient Rome" on the *Filioque* clause. Quite the contrary, he proposed to the pope as well as to the Frankish king a lasting Christian alliance against the Saracens of Africa and Crete.

Photius was therefore sacrificed without suffering persecution. Indeed after his solemn deposition (867) he entered the emperor's palace as tutor to the sons of Basil, and when Ignatius finished his career the victim of the excommunication of the Roman Curia became patriarch once more. If the past was not forgotten, neither at Rome nor at Constantinople, that was due less to the emperor than to the incompatible ambitions of the pope and the patriarch. Photius was too important a personage and too well versed in his theology to admit the *Filioque* or the primacy of the Holy See, and Rome in an epoch of expansion could not yield in any single point of dogma or hierarchy to the people of Constantinople. She was perhaps very glad of this dispute and of the resulting rupture with Photius, for the Byzantine Empire could not entertain the ambitious scheme of theocratic rule which was being elaborated in the Curia.

(*c*) *Success in Europe.*—The Saracens of Crete and Africa were the true enemies of this kingdom. The Bulgars seemed to have washed away in the baptismal font not only their sins but their hatred of the timid and treacherous Greeks of Byzantium. The Russo-Varegs, the chief Slavonic tribe of the Steppes, who, in Michael's reign, wafted by a favourable wind had come in small fishing-boats to insult imperial Constantinople, had been also won over to Christianity after being eye-witnesses of the miracle sent to dispel their doubts, of a book of the gospel untouched by the flames into which it had been thrown. Ragusa, threatened by the Saracen pirates, had recognised the imperial authority, which averted the danger; the other cities of Dalmatia followed this example without forfeiting the privilege, which distinguished them, of electing their own magistrates. The Servian princes of the neighbouring mountains, who had also adopted the imperial religion of the Greek Christianity, had at the same time

www.dacoromanica.ro

abjured, like the Bulgars of Boris-Michael, all hostile feeling towards Byzantium. As in Basil's reign the empire paid its soldiers and fed them liberally, even troops of these Slavs of the Adriatic were to be found fighting in Italy against the Saracens.

(*d*) *Basil I. and the Arabs.*—In Asia, the stronghold of the Paulicians was attacked, and their chief killed later. The island of Cyprus was recaptured for a period. There was in truth no Khalif in those regions to fight against the "king," the *Melek of Roum*. Basil had simply to do with the emirs of the mountains of Tarsus and Melitene, with the petty princes of Syria and the swarms of pillaging Kurds. The emperor also found time to burn for the second time Zapetra (Sozopetra), the country of Motassem, and Samosata, to build a bridge over the Euphrates and to advance to the walls of Melitene, which, however, defied his attack. The Saracen fleet never won any victories in his reign over the Byzantine galleys, often commanded by Ooryphas, an admiral who upheld the naval traditions of ancient Rome.

The Cretans, not content to pillage the coasts of Thrace, infested the Peloponnese. While the Asiatics appeared before Euripus, in the island of Negropont, the islanders, commanded by an Arab and Photius, a Greek, penetrated to Modon and Patras. Soon afterwards, African galleys plundered the islands of Cephalonia and Zante. Bari on the opposite coast had fallen into the power of the followers of the "Carthaginian" emir.

This general aggression by the Musulmans, who claimed the Mediterranean as their empire, did not, however, produce a definite result. On the contrary it provoked a new interference of the Byzantines in the affairs of Italy; they shared in the recapture of Bari and seized several important places, but were powerless to prevent the recovery of the important city of Syracuse. The Saracens could at once oust these rivals.

(*e*) *Home Government of Basil.*—All this gave an impression of security and political revival, which a Court chronicler ventures to compare to the "ancient days" of the

www.dacoromanica.ro

other Rome. Two conspiracies were formed against Basil, but he held his own and retained his popularity to the end. He protected the great majority of the poor, who were able to harvest in peace their corn, their grapes and olives, but he did not dare to touch the privileges of the grandees, the *δυνατοί*, and the proprietors, on whom sometimes a whole province depended. He was the friend and heir of that aged lady in the Peloponnese, Danelis, to whom he was indebted for his first step on the ladder of fortune. She was a sort of queen in the peninsula, possessed thousands of slaves (3000 of them formed a colony in Italy after her death), owned eighty farms in the vicinity of Constantinople and twice appeared before Basil and his son Leo with the airs, the retinue and the gifts of a foreign potentate. Basil not infrequently punished *τοὺς ἐν τέλει*, the officials, but he always respected the Senate, those rich territorial lords whom he often invited to his splendid banquets. He allowed the grandees their suites of retainers and soldiers, which sometimes rivalled the imperial court: he also recognised that institution of *διακονεύειν*, *θεραπεῖν* and *δουλεύειν*, of old barbarian origin, which permitted the young men of the country and suburbs, provided they were strong, good-looking and courageous, to rise to the highest honours in the empire, even to the imperial crown itself, as had been his own fortune. The feudal customs which were being enforced in the West at this epoch, by the same influences and the same needs (on this side the part of the Normans was played by the Arabs), were reproduced more or less exactly in the East.

(*f*) *The Successors of Basil I.*—The policy of the emperors who succeeded Basil I., down to the great Byzantine campaign against the Bulgars, continued to be that which that shrewd diplomatist and able general had inaugurated. The empire had to depend especially on the provinces of Europe; to employ the fleet of Hellas and the soldiers of Thrace and Macedonia, to win over the Bulgars and the Slavs by presents and the new influence of Christianity in order to turn them towards the new fields of warfare. Venice, henceforward often solicited by Byzantine ambassadors; Dalmatia, which the empire showed itself able to defend against Arab pirates; Southern Italy,

www.dacoromanica.ro

which the decadent Frankish Kings were unable to protect against the attack of the Saracens; wealthy Sicily, where the dominion of the Musulmans was less permanent than had been thought—all entered again into the sphere of the political interests of Byzantium. There was no longer any war in the North, in the ancient sense of the word; no bitter war, that is to say against the pagan Bulgars who would not live quietly without pillage. The conversion of Boris opened a new chapter in the relations between Greeks and Bulgars, who were henceforth alike impressed with the necessity of orthodox Christianity and of the great ideal of the empire. In Asia it was above all a question of destroying from time to time the fleets of the pirates, of burning some frontier towns like Samosata, or of chastising some Syrian lord who began to find peace burdensome.

The great task was to drive the Saracens from their final conquests, Sicily and Crete, to put an end to their incursions which had even reached the city of Thessalonica, fallen temporarily into their power; in a word, to recover for the empire, now more haughty than ever, the sovereignty of the sea, the commercial and military pre-eminence in the Mediterranean, and thus to supply it with the means of maintaining and developing its power.

The hardly-won realisation of these vast projects would have secured to the "Romans" that sovereignty of the sea, that *θαλασσοκρατία*, extending as far as the Pillars of Hercules (the Straits of Gibraltar), which one of the Byzantine emperors of the tenth century proclaimed in the presence of the ambassadors of the despised Christian West; but they were interrupted by a new and very dangerous war, of an unprecedented character, with the Northern neighbours, the Bulgars.

(*g*) *War with the Bulgars who dream of the conquest of Constantinople.*—The baptism of Khagan and of the court of Prêslav had established friendly relations of a permanent nature between the Christian dynasts who governed on each side of the Balkans. The emperor was for the future "the spiritual father" of the Bulgarian *ἄρχων*, who for his part acknowledged himself the spiritual son of the *basileus*.

www.dacoromanica.ro

The entire nation of the Bulgars, thanks to the bonds of Christian brotherhood, had become, "Bulgarian friends." A future king of the recently converted country, Simeon, went to Constantinople to acquire in the school of Bardas all the learning it was necessary to know to be considered a cultivated man in that East of the tenth century. The result of that education which grouped the political life of the Christian civilised world round the idea of empire was that Simeon felt imperial ambitions rise in his proud and revengeful barbarian heart. If the pagan Bulgars were only able to pillage and amass booty, why should not the Christian Bulgars, the orthodox Bulgars, so strict in their religious offerings, be called upon to carry out in that other half of the ancient empire the rôle which the Franks had played, and the Germans of "Saxony" in the West wished to play—the proclamation, and the establishment of an emperor of their race over the degenerate descendants of the former ruling nations?

Simeon, who had become king in 893, took advantage of some fiscal measures introduced by the Byzantines, such as the increase of the custom duties and the establishment at Thessalonica of the "Bulgarian mart," which had been hitherto held at Constantinople, to start on a war of conquests which was destined to win for him the city on which the government of the Oriental world depended. The empire enlisted the services of the Khazars and the Magyars, who had instantly to be driven out by the Turkish bands of the Petcheneges from their camps in Bessarabia and forced into the Steppes of the middle Danube and of the Theiss, where they now established a new Hun empire. Simeon, on one occasion, saw himself penned in by the hordes of barbarian shepherds and hunters in his Danubian capital, Silistria, which was then called Durostolon. He succeeded in breaking the forces of a coalition of all his enemies, and the Byzantines long recalled their great defeat at Bulgarophygon, where they fled before the armies of their former pupil and friend Simeon, which were now organised on the Roman system. This Eastern emperor of Bulgarian nationality even ventured to present himself

www.dacoromanica.ro

before Constantinople, where the infant Constantine, surnamed Porphyrogenitus ("born in the purple"), the son of Leo the Philosopher and grandson of Basil, had represented since 912 the rightful dynasty of the Ῥωμαῖοι. A peace was nevertheless signed between the governments of Constantine and of the pretender to the throne of Constantinople. Simeon entered into the capital of the Christian East, but without his victorious army at his back, by the gate through which illustrious foreigners entered, and not by the breach of the conqueror. A few months after Simeon found himself once more with his soldiers on Roman territory, and he even won Andrinople by the treachery of an officer of Armenian birth. It was necessary to recall all the troops which were carrying on operations in Asia against the Saracens in order to repulse this dangerous Christian neighbour.

(*b*) A *Literary Emperor, Constantine Porphyrogenitus: Romanus I. Vicar of the Empire.*—The boy Constantine, still occupied with studies intended to make the descendant of the imperial philosopher one of the most learned men of his time, was too young and weak to stand up against this rebellious product of Byzantine civilisation. He summoned to Constantinople, where certain dignitaries were crushing the crowned Porphyrogenitus without doing any good service to the empire, an old officer named Romanus, known by his valour, experience and piety, a plebeian by birth, who had grown grey in service. This admiral of the empire, which he long defended against Saracen pirates, was soon himself emperor, the ruling and dominant colleague of the youthful Constantine, now left in the obscurity of his books and learned compilations.

Romanus was not more successful against the Bulgars than the generals of the boy emperor. He had to witness a new series of these Bulgarian ravages which had become proverbial: λεία Μυσῶν. His troops were defeated even in pitched battles. Andrinople for the second time fell into the power of the barbarian emperor, and there was nothing left for Romanus but to implore the pity of heaven when the Bulgarian armies presented themselves for the second time before Constantinople. He succeeded in concluding a peace, but, when Simeon ap-

www.dacoromanica.ro

peared in the midst of the *boyars* of his court and of his soldiers, the old savage war-cries were no longer heard, but many a voice in Greek and Romaic hailed the emperor of the hostile camp. Even while renouncing the realisation of his dream, that Bulgar of another age vindicated before the legitimists of Byzantium his imperial character and his rights to the supremacy of the East, of the "Roman Anatole."

The war against the barbarians brought far less advantage to Simeon than that which he had just finished against the possessors of the most ancient and perfect civilisation. He was defeated in the country of the Croats and Serbs, whose *jupans* ruled over the shore of the Adriatic. His death followed on a defeat in 927, to which he was not accustomed. But his successor Peter renewed the profitable war against the empire of the degenerate Greeks.

After new negotiations at Mesembria, a second peace still further improved the situation of that Bulgarian State, which thus had then no rival among the "*gentes*" of the Christian or pagan nations, who were not ennobled by the Byzantine rule. For the first time—even before the Frankish marriage which had brought to Romanus the younger, son of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, a Frankish bride, Bertha, rebaptised Eudoxia, daughter of Hugues de Provence, King of Italy—a family alliance was concluded between the imperial dynasty of Constantinople and a foreign potentate. Peter married a daughter of the Cæsar Christopher, one of the comrades of Romanus and his own son. John, brother of Peter, also received a Greek bride, granted in the name of the empire. This marked a long period of reconciliation between the two kingdoms.

(*i*) *Long Peace with the Bulgars.*—From time to time wild expeditions of Hungarian hordes, thirsting for booty, crossed the European provinces of the empire; but the Bulgars no longer thought of committing those ravages which formerly completed what the Cretan pirates had begun in the islands and on the coasts of Thrace. In place of the old besieging armies, cavalcades of glittering horsemen were to be seen, escorting to Constantinople the Bulgarian *basilissa* Maria, who came with her three children to visit her parents at the

www.dacoromanica.ro

imperial court. The place of honour at the State banquets, presided over by the emperor, was always reserved for the envoy or envoys of Bulgaria, who came, with heads shorn in the Hungarian fashion and brazen chains round their necks, to take part in the Byzantine festivities. Under Constantine Porphyrogenitus the title of *basileus* was definitely accorded to the prince, who hitherto had been called by the title of ἄρχων or prince-regent, which was equally adapted to the heads of the "genealogies" and tribes of the Petcheneges, and to the ancient Magyar chiefs, also called Waywodes, in the Slavonic fashion.

The Byzantines thus, by the power of orthodox Christianity, had secured imperial alliances and safeguarded one of their frontiers by alluring annual presents.

(*j*) *Relations with the decadent Arabs.*—But so long as these complications with their Northern neighbours lasted, the Saracens of Tarsus, those of Crete and Africa, the subjects of the great Emir and Khalif of Bagdad, who was called at Constantinople the *amermoumni*, those of the "prince" of Africa, styled in the protocols ἐνδοξότατος (most glorious) and ἐξουσιάστης (lord) of the Musulmans, as well as those of the ἄρχων of Crete, had their opportunity, which they used to the utmost.

The Khalifate of Bagdad represented little, and the "prince of the faithful" was a sort of Dalai-Lama, very rich and very uninfluential, absolutely under the control of his military adviser, a Bouide Turk who spent his time in hunting or in the pleasures of the feast or the harem. But in the mountains of Tarsus was to be found a crafty and brave prince, who had at his call his highlanders, always ready to reap with the sword-blade the harvest of the neighbouring lands which belonged to the imperialists. In old Persia there were still Persian or Armenian chiefs who considered the provinces of the empire as their lawful and traditional prey. Every year the roving bands of Islam collected at some place in Syria in order to invade in September the country of Roum, which was just harvesting. In all the old harbours of Phœnicia: Berytos, Tripolis and Gaza vessels were waiting for the favourable

www.dacoromanica.ro

moment to combine with a swift and bold flotilla and visit the shores and the islands which still belonged to those rich and helpless Christians.

In Crete the Arab rule had succeeded in winning over the native population, which made common cause with the emir and his raiders. A considerable part of the Greek inhabitants had embraced Islam, to which they were loyally and bravely constant.

Finally, the African Emir left no stone unturned to recover Sicily completely and to gain a firm footing on the Italian mainland, where the Byzantines had long had their garrisons. The Moslem potentate often found unexpected allies among the Christians. The feudal princes of Capua and Salerno, the citizens of Naples and many discontented Byzantine officers did not disdain to treat with him, in order to revenge themselves on those Greeks who brought with them an inconvenient subserviency to the Church of Constantinople and a burdensome fiscal system.

Here and there in the chronicles of the reigns which followed that of Basil—the reign of Leo, Alexander, Constantine, Romanus (920), and of Constantine restored at a ripe age, first as a colleague of Romanus, then as sole monarch —we find mention of Arab exploits. The pirates showed themselves at Samos, in Attica, at Lemnos, at Taormina in Sicily, at Constantinople, at Thessalonica, which Leo of Tripolis, one of their best known chiefs, conquered and abandoned in 904, and at Strovilo. But the second reign of Constantine marks a distinct change in the monotonous annals of these acts of piracy.

(*k*) *Attacks on the Infidels.*—The empire resumed the offensive, which it did not again abandon. The ideal of the sovereignty of the sea loomed more distinctly. A new era had dawned to raise the empire from its weakness and its humiliation. The activity of the Macedonian dynasty, that of its predecessors, Michael and Leo, and that of the best among the iconoclast emperors of the seventh century, bore fruit at last. Byzantine found herself confronted by enemies whom she succeeded in wearing out, by her victories and her

www.dacoromanica.ro

defeats, by her master-spirit and her energy and her admirable tenacity of purpose; she had at her command resources hitherto lacking, she had definitely elaborated a system of government, of social organisation, of instruction and defence, absolutely adapted to the requirements of the age. The old tottering structure, which often threatened to collapse, was restored without touching its foundations, which were in a condition to hold out four or five centuries more. It remained standing, and was completed and embellished. The whole East seemed obliged still to shelter under its shade, and even the West feared the force of this ancient fabric and the ideal which those who maintained it presented to the eleventh century.

A careful study of this organisation is necessary in order to understand the "epic" of *reconquista* which was unrolled in the East from Constantine Porphyrogenitus down to the Crusades.

CHAPTER II

THE FORCES OF THE RESTORED EMPIRE

(*a*) *New Greek character of the Empire.*—Henceforward this empire showed no traces of Rome in its nationality and language. At best a few Latin words were still preserved in the old formulas of the ceremonies and games, and in the manual of military commands. These words were most frequently written in Greek letters, and so pronounced as to be unrecognisable. The name of Ῥωμαῖοι, however, remained unchanged, like an everlasting title of honour, a vindication of pride, an expression of contempt for the Arabs, the Franks and barbarians; Ἕλλην was the pagan with his superstitions, his deities and his demons; even the Hellenic literature was no longer ascribed to that people, which had not arrived at the knowledge of the true God. Homer, Plutarch, the historians and the geographers, were won over to the Byzantine civilisation, and means were always found to introduce them into the

www.dacoromanica.ro

circle of ideas belonging to these middle ages of the Greeks and the Grecised Orientals. The school of Bardas, about which further information would be welcome, filled this rôle with admirable tact. A great part of the institutions still came from old Rome, although the names were mixed with Greek (for example, *proto-asecretis*), or even completely translated with that language of the people which had spread as a vulgar *patois*.

(*b*) *The Emperors of the Tenth Century.*—The sacred character of the emperor did not suffer during the period of transformation. He was always the great, the "very pious in Christ," the "all-merciful," the "victorious" *basileus*, king of kings, a title which he did not recognise in any other except the King of the Bulgars, who had acquired this title as a wedding-gift from a Byzantine princess. He had his countless immense palaces, which went back to the age of Constantine and Justinian; he possessed the riches of art and money accumulated in his private treasury, his εἰδικόν, which he was free to retain for his pleasures, or to spend, if he judged well, in the interests and needs of the State. He had many officers, a court of eunuchs, which had charge of the various departments of the imperial house, his pages who bore the Roman names of *silentiarii*, *vestitores*, or even the new Greek name of διάκονοι, and also his guards, the *scholarii*. The prestige of past times, of the old and complicated ceremonial and the artful illusions, enhanced his personality in the eyes of his subjects and his foreign guests, if not in the eyes of his own associates. He was in some sense a bishop, and, in spite of Christianity and his pompous humility toward Heaven, divine attributes were attached to his person. The streets when he passed were decked with flowers, fragrant perfumes were poured out before his steps, he heard the priests chanting hymns composed in his honour or to glorify his imperial office.

(*c*) *Change in Manners.*—The old savage treatment of the emperors was sensibly softened. Assassinations were rarer than in the time of the true Romans or in the early centuries of Byzantium. The people and the Church were no longer

www.dacoromanica.ro

indifferent on this point. Attempts were made to smooth away the impression caused by the murder of the young Michael the Drunkard; the court chroniclers related that he passed out of this world without feeling any pain, in the heavy sleep of his debauch. Leo the Deacon records the violent end of Nicephorus Phocas with details calculated to produce horror. The patriarch Polyeucte forbade John, the successor of Nicephorus, to enter the church until he had identified and punished the murderers, and he was forced to submit, at least nominally, to this categorical command. It is by no means certain that John died of poison.

An emperor too young, or too old, or incapable was often replaced without recourse to bloodshed. A new emperor was proclaimed and crowned—not as Cæsar, but as true emperor, as "Augustus"—and to save appearances he joined his name with that of the deposed emperor. The pretenders, who conspired against the reigning emperor or were proclaimed by the soldiers in some distant province, could now be spared if they submitted in time. Conquered and captured they suffered only the penalty of losing their sight, and sometimes there was a pretence of "burning their eyes," when the eyelids only were seared. The sons of Romanus II. (959-963), the successor of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, who died young, were removed one after the other, after posing on their tottering thrones in empty ceremonial, without their lives being forfeited; they were not subjected to the τύφλωσις or the not infrequent emasculation, nor forced to take the tonsure in a monastery, as was the custom of the Franks; they were allowed to slumber in the rags of their purple. Exile in a distant island was considered sufficient punishment. When an emperor fell, his partisans, even his most intimate associates, were only banished to their estates in the country.

(*d*) *The Clergy.*—The emperor was no longer confronted by a rich and powerful clergy, censorious and ready to fulminate anathemas on the "Sons of Amalek" who dared to touch the rights and customs of the Church. Michael the Drunkard and his successors of the Macedonian dynasty were

www.dacoromanica.ro

able easily to return to the ancient *iconodule* orthodoxy, for iconoclasm had produced all the results which the State, concentrated in the person of the emperor, expected from persecutions. The monasteries were everywhere in ruins, their lands confiscated, their revenues dissipated, and the traditions of the days of wealth and influence had fled. When gifts began to pour in once more, the emperor soon saw the danger, and took energetic measures against the accumulation of offerings, the expansion of ecclesiastical property, and the creation of new religious houses. Nicephorus Phocas, the second successor of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, forbade these pious acts, which he stigmatised as earthly vanities, and only allowed the restoration of the old dilapidated edifices or the erection, in thinly populated regions or in the heart of the mountains, of hermitages which might serve also for the defence of the empire.

Almost everywhere the bishops were now very poor. They were indeed prohibited, under this same Phocas, from holding any property without the special permission of the emperor. The proud Lombard bishop Luitprand of Cremona, accustomed to the riches of the Italian Sees and to the numerous suites which accompanied the prelates of the West, speaks with insulting pity of these ragged bishops, suitable to the barefooted populace of Constantinople, who have not even a servant to open and shut the door of their monastic hovels. At every vacancy—a period prolonged by Nicephorus Phocas for the benefit of the treasurer, which nominated the administrator of the diocese and took its share of the revenues—the preference was given to those monks who were distinguished by a profound contempt for the things of this world, and would not therefore meddle with them in their new position. After having raised to the patriarchal dignity the sons and brothers of emperors, a proceeding hitherto unprecedented, the civil power drew from the monasteries the most ascetic of the worn-out old men, whose whole life had been a renunciation. It happened now and again that one of these aged saints of spotless life ventured to remonstrate with the emperor himself and to

www.dacoromanica.ro

forbid him access to the church before he had done complete penitence for his sins and his crimes; such was the honourable attitude of Polyeucte towards Nicephorus, who had married contrary to the ordinances of the Church, and toward Tzimiskes, the murderer of that Nicephorus his predecessor; and, before Tzimiskes, the emperor Leo the Philosopher (886-911), saw the principal entrance to the church closed to him because of the scandals of his private life. Bardas the Cæsar met with a similar affront from the patriarch Ignatius. But these patriarchs, capable of such courageous acts, could no longer organise a movement, of which the very elements were wanting, for the needy and rough monks of the tenth century possessed none of the revolutionary virtues of their predecessors who fought against the impious and blaspheming iconoclasts. If there was some eunuch at hand, he was preferred to the other candidates for the dignity of a bishop, and even a patriarch was drawn from their ranks. The patriarchs were, it is true, no longer cudgelled, subjected to public humiliations, tortured or condemned to death; but it often happened that an emperor, without convening a council, deposed an obnoxious patriarch and sent him into exile, without causing the slightest popular movement in Constantinople, once so famous for its uproars. It must be remembered that the school of Cæsar Bardas, which supplied a somewhat pagan education, took away from the monks many of their pupils, and deprived them of their high position as teachers. The writers produced by this school extended a comprehensive forgiveness to the iconoclast emperors, to whose names in their Chronicles are attached the customary titles of respect.

(*e*) *Administration of the Middle Empire.*—The choice of officials was naturally of great importance. At each change of emperor, even if effected under the ordinary legal conditions, nominations were showered freely on the associates and loyal retainers, the οἰκεῖοι, while those who had served the deceased or dethroned emperor retired to look after their estates and their serfs.

This applied not only to the great posts at Court and in

www.dacoromanica.ro

the city, to the officers of the empire, dependent either on the emperor (*ταγματικοί*) or on the Senate (*συγκλητικοί*), but also to the commanders and administrators of the provinces, which had lately completely changed their character.

Under the old provincial system there were governors in whom the civil and military authority reposed; they bore different titles and were closely dependent on the emperor and the Capital. The necessity of defensive measures against the barbarians of Asia and Europe, Bulgars, Arabs, and pirates, involved changes in this organisation which dated from the really Roman period. While the names were Grecised, the *comes* becoming a *strategus* (*στρατηγός*) and the *provincia* a *theme* (*θῆμα*), while the distribution of the *themes*, in conformity with the military problems of the day, was quite changed,[1] the functions of these officers were extended, and their independence and initiative developed. The *strategus*, having at his disposal a rich patrimony of lands, and revenues from customs and other sources attached to his post, was free to exercise the imperial authority according to his conceptions of duty and his acquaintance with the country; his sovereign had delegated to him during the period of his office the fullest privileges and rights in the province, which he was no longer required to administer, but to govern. He had under his orders, without any restriction, the soldiers who had received a grant of land, the fief of a *καβαλλάριος* (knight), to the value of four or five *λίτραι* (pounds), or a fief, a sailor's *τόπιον*, of three pounds value only, in return for compulsory military service under the command of the *strategus* only. As subordinate officers he had *turmarchs*, who commanded the troops or *τούρμαι*, the *drungarii* or admirals, and a complete administrative staff. Each soldier enjoyed the possession of a plot of land varying in size according to his rank; there was one class of fiefs for those who, like the *scholarii* or the Thrakesioi, provided their own arms, another for those who received help in case of an

[1] The new *themes* were named after the fortresses, the adjoining foreign provinces, or celebrated generals of the past.

www.dacoromanica.ro

expedition, who combined with the *syndotai* and were not therefore *monoprosopoi*, a third for the commanders. At the outset of a general campaign, which was usually led by the emperor, one of his associates, or an imperial legate, the *strategi* were asked what they were disposed to offer, what they "took on themselves," whether auxiliary troops, vessels, arms, utensils, horses or pecuniary assistance. They had the right to requisition from the towns, monasteries or private individuals that which they needed for their armament and the other preparations.

(*f*) *The Army.*—There were still foreign companies, ἑταιρεῖαι, in the army enjoying special privileges. Thus the Saracens who were baptised and settled on the territory of the empire received a strip of land, inalienable like that of the other soldiers, seeds, and an exemption from taxation for a term of years. Some of these foreign companies were stationed on that point of the frontier which they knew and loved the most, and they lived there under commanders of their own race with special titles. Such were the Mardaites, who, under their "captain" or *katepanos*, defended the gorges of the Taurus; the Iberi, who were subject to an almost independent *couropalate*, or several groups of Armenians on the sea-coast and in the interior who had at their head ἄρχοντες or native princes. Other foreigners were scattered over the whole extent of the empire; there were thus groups of Mardaites to be found in Epirus, the Peloponnese and in the Cephalonian *theme* of the Ionian Islands; Russians, whose ἑταιρεία dated from the time of Michael the Drunkard, were on guard at Durazzo and in Dalmatia, while inhabitants of Palermo were employed in the maritime wars of the East.

By these measures, by the creation of new provinces on a strictly local system, by the establishment of a State and military class firmly attached to the very land which it ought to defend and which belonged to it and its successors if they could fill the part of soldiers, by numerous fortifications in the strategic positions on the mountains, by posts of observation planted almost everywhere, by a skilfully organised system of

www.dacoromanica.ro

spies, by the development of the art of watching and surprising the enemy, the Byzantine Empire had become a great military power precisely at the moment when all its neighbours were growing weak.

(*g*) *The Lower Classes.*—At the same time the economical and moral improvement of the inferior classes is clearly seen. At Constantinople and in the provinces they enjoyed the enlightened and sympathetic attention of the government, and daily tokens of justice and charity were expected from a good emperor.

The great sanguinary festivals of the Hippodrome had long disappeared from the capital. The political rôle of the *demes*, so closely connected with the *circenses*, rapidly fell into insignificance. There were no longer collisions between the "Blues" and the "Greens," rivals for the success of their jockeys. The names of these antiquated factions are only found in the lists of the dignitaries who kept these "demarchs" henceforth deprived of all influence, or in the old ceremonial of the court. The populace had seldom enjoyed the gratification of triumphs, and if there was a victory it was almost always gained by officers who never came to Constantinople to receive the acclamations of the crowd. Theophilus on one occasion only, having returned as conqueror from Asia, celebrated the *ἱππικὸν* and was greeted by the ancient Roman acclamation: "Welcome to our incomparable party-leader (*φακτωιάρη*)." When, with Nicephorus Phocas, there were even more soldier emperors, *imperatores* in the old style, they paid honours to the miraculous image of the guardian Virgin which they followed in procession. The emperor Michael the Drunkard was the last enthusiastic patron of the games in the Circus, in which on the occasion of the birth of his son he took part himself as a chariot-driver. Some riots leading to bloodshed in the midst of the games, during the time of Nicephorus, definitely disgusted the people of Constantinople with this show. The inhabitants of Constantinople had to be content then with the familiar distractions of the court entertainments, where the old well-worn robes and ancient jewels of unfashionable shape were paraded, or of some *προέλευσις*,

www.dacoromanica.ro

some imperial procession, to see which this pauper, bare-footed population lined the streets.

(*b*) *The Capital of the Empire.*—But the emperors of the new régime took care not to leave the Capital without its ordinary provisions. They insured it perfect tranquillity, and it was long since, on the change of sovereign, crowds had been seen to scour the streets in search of loot. Justice was now prompt and sure. Hospitals were maintained for the necessitous poor. Money was distributed to the people by order of the charitable emperors, who had no idea of saving up the resources of the *εἰδικόν*. The chroniclers occasionally record extraordinary acts of liberality; the persons who had built on State territory obtained remission of their annual quit-rent, while outstanding debts due to the government were cancelled. The population of Constantinople thus remained loyal to the emperor in those critical moments when the troops of the pretenders were marching on the city, and there were even many secret regrets on the violent death of Nicephorus Phocas, who, with his swarthy complexion and corpulent figure, had not been a fine-looking officer and, naturally coarse and brusque, had never troubled to win any personal affection.

(*i*) *Changes in the Administration of Rural Districts.*—These Macedonian emperors had the courage to investigate the condition of the land in the rural districts, which had long been a prey to the usurpations of the *ἄρχοντες* and *δυνασταί*, and to introduce reforms to the prejudice of these grandees.

The name of any soldier who could not discharge his duty because he was ruined was expunged from the lists of the register; it was decreed for the future, that the sale of military fiefs should not have any legal validity. The large proprietors were forbidden to buy and join to their own *latifundia* the poor man's field; if it was proved that their conduct was aggressive and tyrannical they were to be driven from their hereditary estates and their own acquisitions. On the other hand the large estates were to be safeguarded in the greater interests of the empire; the poor men were prohibited by the edict of Phocas from buying plots of any great property which

www.dacoromanica.ro

was being broken up. Since in spite of these enactments the proprietors of the *latifundia* flourished in Asia—(the family of Phocas was itself one of the richest owners of land)—Basil II. reinforced the edicts of his predecessors and strictly forbade the continuance of these abuses. If it was impossible to restore to the peasant serfs their liberty, or to the rural proletariat the possession of their fields, the empire did its best to ensure that the existing privileges should not be overstepped.

The internal conditions were in this fairly satisfactory state when the tide of recuperation began to flow.

CHAPTER III

THE CRUSADES IN ASIA DURING THE TENTH CENTURY, AND THE CONQUEST OF EASTERN BULGARIA

(*a*) *Conquest of Crete.* — An expedition prepared by Constantine Porphyrogenitus against the Cretan robbers proved futile. Romanus II. organised another, the command of which he entrusted to Nicephorus Phocas, who was fated soon to succeed him. This Byzantine army disembarked successfully, won some victories against the undisciplined Arabs of the old emir and besieged his capital; it held out for several months, but Phocas persisted in passing the whole winter on this hostile soil. During that time another Phocas, Leo, brother of Nicephorus, was routing the Arab invaders who came from Cilicia. Nicephorus himself succeeded him as commander of the armies in Asia and generalissimo of the *strategi* of Anatolia. He would have inaugurated a new cycle of exploits against the Infidels but for the death of the emperor in 963. When he received the tidings he had himself proclaimed Augustus by his soldiers, at Cæsarea in Asia Minor.

(*b*) *Wars of Recuperation in Asia Minor and Syria.*—He left the supreme government of Asia to a comrade-in-arms, himself an Asiatic from Armenia, John, surnamed the Little,

www.dacoromanica.ro

Tschemeschgigh, a word which the Greek pronunciation made Tzimiskes. This little fair-haired man, with his blue eyes, was an energetic and capable leader, who by his victories paved a way to the throne which his comrade Nicephorus, the elderly husband of the young and beautiful widow of Romanus, was occupying.

But Nicephorus placed himself at the head of his armies in the East. On his first expedition he took Mopsuestion in Cilicia, on his second Tarsus itself, the nest of those pirates and highwaymen who continued, many centuries after, the old desultory warfare of the Cilicians against Rome. It is true that an army sent into Sicily was annihilated from not having followed the prudent plans which Nicephorus published by one of his officers, and that it thus dimmed the glory it won by the recapture of Syracuse and Taormina; but the emperor, who slowly and surely was carrying through his plans, conquered Edessa. He appeared before the port of Tripolis, whence the piratical squadron had so often sailed, and laid siege to Antioch; the town surrendered some time after the return of Nicephorus to Europe.

(*c*) *Usurpation of John Tzimiskes.*—Nicephorus did not penetrate further. Tzimiskes, banished to his estates, murdered him with great barbarity in his palace, where he was sleeping stretched on the ground (969). At this news Bardas, son of Leo Phocas, and consequently the nephew of the assassinated monarch, revolted, and collected an army on the numerous estates which he and his friends possessed.

Another great lord of Asia, Bardas Skleros, was able by himself to check the new attempt at usurpation. For that purpose he made a liberal distribution of offices, by inserting names in the decrees which his brother-in-law the emperor had put into his hands in blank. Tzimiskes, later, began his Asiatic war against the emirs, now abandoned by the Khalif and his Turkish general.

(*d*) *The Crusade of Tzimiskes.*—Once more he made elaborate preparations, and, advancing with a perfect knowledge of the country and the methods of fighting the enemy, he penetrated to Ecbatana. Then, following up these suc-

www.dacoromanica.ro

cesses, which resembled those of Heraclius in the first and fortunate period of his reign, he carried through Syria the Byzantine standards, which had not been seen in those parts for more than 300 years. It was a genuine Greek Crusade —the Saracens who killed the Patriarch of Jerusalem, as an accomplice of the emperor Nicephorus, had realised this fact—a true crusade, without the crude rashness, the chivalrous and foolhardy bravery of the Western Crusaders, who were destined to fight these campaigns over again a century later.

Emesa and Apamea were taken, the splendid city of Damascus, which is enshrined in its oasis as in an earthly paradise, had to pay ransom. Balanea, Berytos, Byblos, the piratical ports of the Saracens, were garrisoned by the soldiers of *Roum* in this flood-tide of victory. Tripolis, the most important of these Phœnician towns, was once more threatened with ruin (974-975). The Byzantines saw Nazareth, ascended Mount Tabor, received embassies from the "people of Ramleh and Jerusalem," collected relics for the churches in Constantinople and exacted tribute from the emirs, powerful or petty, of those regions. The little Armenian, who had thus proved his capacities as a great general, wrote, without much boast, to a compatriot and ally, the King of Armenia Aschod: "All Phœnicia, Palestine and Syria are freed from the tyranny of the Musulmans and are subject to the Romans." Like a true victorious crusader, Tzimiskes was the first "Roman" emperor to strike gold and copper coins bearing the figure of Christ.

A second work of recuperation was effected on the North, where the Danube was set free, just as, to some extent, in these regions the Euphrates and Tigris had been.

(*e*) *War against the Bulgars and the Russians on the Danube.*—Nicephorus had broken with his "spiritual son" of Prêslav, who had sent an embassy to ask him for annual gifts, and would not, or could not, check the passage of the devastating hordes of Hungarians. As his thoughts were concentrated on the East, as he hoped also to interfere in the affairs of Italy, where the descent of the German King

www.dacoromanica.ro

Otto had ended in the creation of a new Western Empire, which held Rome and also claimed the possession of the Byzantine province of Lombardy and the suzerainty over the princes of Capua, Salerno and Beneventum, tributaries of the emperor, Nicephorus wished to entrust the task of chastising his "Bulgarian friends" to paid auxiliaries. He applied to the Russians, the *dromites*, the pagan "vagabonds," who were often seen as merchants and ambassadors at Constantinople; their Grand Princess Olga had just visited that city. Sviatoslav, the ἄρχων of these powerful and savage barbarians, with their long hair and filthy dress, willingly proffered his services; he defeated the Bulgars, took from them Silistria and even their capital Prêslav. Then they did not wish to evacuate the country, awaiting perhaps rewards which the empire could not or would not grant them. Nicephorus was not so contemptuous of the prince of "Saxony" and the Western natives as to consent to flatter the Tauroscythians.

The Russians, as it happened, kept quiet in their new quarters; they were not sufficiently sure of the Bulgars to show any ambitious intentions, and they did not contemplate abandoning their old country on the Dnieper, among the villages of the Letitches and Krivitches, on the icy plains with their boundless lakes.

Byzantium could not tolerate this intrusion any longer. Nicephorus would doubtless have swept away in a few weeks the barbarian horde which occupied one of the provinces of the heritage of Justinian. When the Russians learnt of the death of the brave emperor, and the terrible revolt in Asia, they began to move, and their bands, which included also some Bulgarian elements, pushed on to Philippopolis, and captured it. The prisoners were impaled, according to their savage customs. A poet of the time wrote on the tomb of Nicephorus, in the mausoleum of Constantine the Great, some despairing lines, which invoked the heroic soul of the old sovereign who was killed.

Bardas Skleros fought, at first, an autumn campaign against the Russians and gained some success. But soon the serious danger in Asia called him to that new field of action.

www.dacoromanica.ro

The Russians were able to inflict a severe defeat on his successor.

Tzimiskes himself in the spring set out against these daring pirates. He crossed the mountains without opposition and attacked and seized the Bulgarian Capital. Sviatoslav offered battle under the walls of Silistria. It was fiercely contested; decisively defeated, he was fortunate in being able to retreat, but he was killed by the Petcheneges, who were on the look out for him as he passed. Boris II., the lawful *basileus* of the Bulgars, was deposed. Two Byzantine cities rose on the scene of the two battles, the city of John and that of Saint Theodora, patron of the Byzantine arms (971).

The right policy would have been to push into that Western Bulgaria, into those Macedonian territories, where scattered provincial life had long prevailed, since the rich Boyar Houses had usurped the power, and once more to settle the relations with the Adriatic regions. But the victorious Tzimiskes was soon occupied by the affairs of Asia, by that holy war which was intended to absolve him from a terrible murder. On his return he sank rapidly; he was thought to have been poisoned. His premature death meant a new civil war, which was tedious and difficult.

The crusade in Syria and the expulsion of the Russians, the conquest, the *reconquista* of Eastern Bulgaria, of the true old Bulgarian country, those famous exploits of the new empire, had been achieved by usurpers, by soldier-emperors who filled, at the side of the grandsons of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the position of mandatory-general coupled with the full imperial title and not merely the more modest one of Cæsar, which Romanus Lecapenus held under Constantine himself, and the founder of the dynasty, the first Basil, under the unhappy Michael. Nicephorus Phocas and John Tzimiskes had won their titles to the supreme power by their victories over the Saracens, their successes in Asia or the islands, and their beneficent administration in the East. That East—larger, richer and more cultivated than the Byzantine West—having long enjoyed a peace and security which the West, ravaged by the hordes of Russians, Bulgars, Hungarians and Petcheneges,

www.dacoromanica.ro

could not but envy, seemed henceforth destined to supply the "Roman world" with its leaders, chosen from among the bravest and wealthiest proprietors of the valleys of Asia Minor or the plains of Syria.

(*f*) *Pretenders invade the Empire after Tzimiskes.*—This fact was apparent after the death of Tzimiskes. The premature end of the valiant crusader was ascribed to poison given by the conspirators who had been bought over with the money of the wealthy eunuch Basil; this latter, an illegitimate son of an emperor, had been granted the title of παραχείμενος (grand chamberlain), and himself aspired, in spite of his mutilation, to the throne of his father and grandfather. Tzimiskes being dead, the young princes, Basil and Constantine, nominally held the power, but for the moment everything depended on the goodwill of the eunuch. At an age when the upper ranks of the clergy contained many eunuchs among the archbishops and patriarchs, when, as under Justinian, eunuchs played a part in the State, there is little cause for surprise if the unhappy personage, whose very name was a spur to ambition, had aspirations to the crown.

However, the generals in Asia did not see the matter in this light. For many years, both before and after the disgrace and death of Basil the Eunuch, they claimed the heritage of the two emperor-*strategi*, whose successors they thought themselves worthy to become.

First of all there was Bardas Skleros, who, without donning the purple buskins, rose in rebellion. The emperor repeatedly sent against him the Asiatic troops which had remained loyal and the European contingents, but without success. In order to be free of him he called the other Bardas, the relation of Nicephorus Phocas. Skleros was then forced to seek refuge on the territory of the Khalif. But hardly had the populace at Constantinople tasted the joy of the victory when Bardas Phocas proclaimed himself emperor; he had been aided by the Asiatic dynasts and by the Iberians, while Skleros had won, over the soldiers, and amongst the neighbouring peoples in those parts, the Armenians and Arabs. He came as far as Abydos, where the young Basil went to meet him, with his

www.dacoromanica.ro

Russian mercenaries sent by Vladimir, prince of Kiev, husband of his sister Anna, the Christian successor of the valiant Sviatoslav. A sunstroke or fit of apoplexy proved fatal to Phocas at the moment when he was hastening against the Emperor of Europe, and the sudden death was ascribed to the protection accorded by the Virgin to the legitimate sovereign of her city of Constantinople.

On the news of the proclamation of Phocas, the fugitive Bardas Skleros, the second "Augustus," had come back from exile. He now adopted a policy of duplicity which was intended to secure him advantages in any contingency. But when he saw that fortune veered round to the young Basil, he opened negotiations. The emperor saw him approach and calmly lay down the badges of the dignity which he had usurped. He was old and had become blind during his unfortunate wanderings. Basil trusted his word and, in accordance with the milder spirit of the age, allowed him to die in peace, in the country, on one of his estates.

The troubles in Asia were ended. There was no longer any real danger to fear on the part of the old enemies. The work of Tzimiskes had remained complete; a coalition of the Emirs of Phœnicia with the Emir of Damascus failed to retake the beautiful and large city of Antioch. The Egyptians contented themselves with destroying the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and with persecuting the monks, whom they suspected of intriguing with their Christian emperor. A heritage in Iberia and Armenia, where the State of Vaspourakhan, who left the great ruins of Ani in Abasgia, was decaying, fell to the empire, now revived, reformed and consolidated in its spirit and its resources.

www.dacoromanica.ro

CHAPTER IV

THE APOGEE OF THE NEW EMPIRE UNDER BASIL II. (976-1025)

(*a*) *Home Government of Basil II.*—Basil did not restrict himself to accepting the territories which were offered to him. Indefatigable in war as in State affairs, which he transacted rapidly, contrary to all the forms of ancient ceremonial, this remarkable man, risen from the heart of a middle-class family, went everywhere to receive personally the submission of the countries gained by his diplomacy, to reassure his new subjects, to allay dissatisfaction, to fortify the towns and passes, and to spread that respect for the person of the emperor which was still the core of Byzantine political action. All the neighbouring peoples of Asia, as far as the Arabs, felt his power. Asia had never led so peaceful, so happily tranquil an existence as that which she enjoyed during this reign of fifty years. We must add that the abuses of the "powerful" were once more severely forbidden. The rich could no longer slowly acquire the land of the poor, and notwithstanding the opposition of the highest dignitaries and of the patriarch himself, Basil instituted the new law of the ἀλληλέγκιον, which compelled the rich to pay the share of the personal tax incident on the small proprietors of the neighbourhood, who must have been reduced to crying poverty.

(*b*) *Destruction of the Western Empire of the Bulgars.*—At the same time the sea remained the indisputable heritage of the Byzantines. A Russian prince, landing unexpectedly, tried to ensconce himself at Lemnos; the imperial officers succeeded in deceiving him by their artifices and in killing him and his followers. The annals of the pirates are henceforth closed. It might be that the Rhomaic armies were not very fortunate in the endless contests with the Calabrian potentates, but Basil did not pay too much attention to these affairs of "Longibardia." The marriage of the Doge of Venice with the daughter of a Byzantine dignitary was an

www.dacoromanica.ro

important political event, and his contemporaries felt the far-reaching effects of it.

The Constantinopolitan Chronicle of Skylitzes does not fail to record the most petty details of the campaigns and personal expeditions of the emperor against the Bulgars of Macedonia. They were always "long and difficult," "interesting and profitable," without any necessity of exaggerating their importance.

At the time of the settlement of Sviatoslav at Prêslav and at Silistria, certain Boyars had sought refuge in the Western regions of the Bulgarian Empire, which, since the failure of the great Simeon against the Serbs and Croats, passed a tolerably independent existence. At their head stood the sons of a certain Shishman, "baron" of the village of Trnŏvo. They were *Bogomiles*, orthodox converts to Paulicianism, the heresy imported by the Asiatic colonists persecuted for their religion by the Macedonian emperor. Bogomilism admitted an evil deity who *is* and fights against the good deity who *will be;* their worship of sorrow showed orgiastic strains; believing in the spirit of the Scriptures and not in dry formularies, they made a selection among the books of the New Testament and held the Hebrew bible in special veneration. They, like the Iberians also, had an affection for the old biblical names. The *comitopouli* of the Byzantines, the "sons of boyars," called themselves David, Moses, Aaron, and Samuel. Their archbishop, a schismatical patriarch, who did not acknowledge the authority of Byzantium, also bore the name of David.

In these districts on the Drin, in those mountains of Macedonia, on the littoral of the Adriatic, were to be found Servian princes, leading a life of poverty, uncertainty and barbarism, Albanian clans and descendants of the ancient Roman population of Illyria, those Vlach shepherds who wandered with their flocks on the plains of Thessaly, all round Larissa, right into the Balkans as far as Trnovo, Triaditza or Sophia. These tribes, galled by the Byzantine taxes, joined the boyars of Bulgaria and formed an army for them. The names of the officers of the new Bulgarian State,

www.dacoromanica.ro

which received, it appears, from the pope in return for empty promises the royal title, but was not ever recognised as such by the Byzantines, are of a quite new type, Vlach and Servian. All these Nicolitzas, Nestoritzas, Ilitzas, Dragshans, Dobromirs, Vladislavs and Krakras have a strange and unfamiliar ring. The double "Rhomaic" names are not infrequently found in the case of some chiefs, one of whom styled himself simultaneously Gabriel and Rhomanos, but the Byzantine influence was very weak in the midst of these tribes, who possessed a great savage energy and an unusual quickness and versatility in warfare.

Under Samuel, the heir to his brothers, who died or were murdered by him, a kingdom of revolt and brigandage was created, which had its centre first near Lake Prespa, and then in the new town of Ochrida, hidden at the end of a defile. Its branches spread eastwards as far as Triaditza and Great Prêslav, momentarily wrested from the Byzantines, westwards as far as Durazzo, which was treacherously recaptured, northwards as far as Vidin on the Danube, southwards finally as far as Thessalonica, which they never succeeded in storming, and the frontiers of that Thessaly which they had so often ravaged from one end to the other. Almost independent chiefs, whose loyalty to their king was wavering, commanded in the eagle nests perched on the mountains, at the mouth of the defiles, former Roman φρουρία, which the Bulgarian bands had surprised and garrisoned.

Basil left no stone unturned to subdue this mountain country, which hid in its valleys and fortresses a perpetual menace to all the provinces of the West and cut the communications which the new empire wished to open on the side of the Adriatic and of adjacent Italy. Money, titles, treachery, hideous punishments, wholesale blindings, the fortification of strategic positions and military action by the emperor were successively employed. The Bulgars seldom recovered that which the "Romans" had once taken away from them. Prêslav was soon retaken, and the imperial forces did not lose that Silistria which watched and harassed

www.dacoromanica.ro

the Petcheneges beyond the Danube. Triaditza was blockaded. The castles were captured, one after the other, with an admirable persistency; a work of extreme difficulty even for a modern army. Fortune smiled on them. Samuel died and pretenders disputed the succession; the last of them, John, perished at the siege of Durazzo, and his widow, Maria, surrendered the rest of the heritage. The stolen treasures of Ochrida were displayed at the feet of the Basil whom posterity called the "Slayer of the Bulgars" (Bulgaroktonos). The Greek administration, the Greek liturgy, and the Greek language were introduced everywhere. Since Croatia and Sirmium submitted, and the Hungarians were passing through a religious crisis (St. Stephen, the first Christian king, had like Samuel received his royal title from Rome), the empire reached the Adriatic; it possessed the Danube, the Balkan peninsula knew no other master.

Firm in his conviction, Basil died, in 1025, at the age of 72, after having accomplished alone, without *strategi*, auxiliaries, or advisers the imposing work of political restoration.

(*c*) *Results of Basil's reign: Europe.*—Basil had created a new order of things, both in the inner life of the empire and in the foreign relations of the Roman world. We must give the characteristics of the new order before following out the development of the State and society, and of the foreign relations down to the moment when new conflicts and newly added institutions created a new epoch after the decadence of this system introduced by Basil.

Basil, whose lifelong dream was to be crowned emperor of the West, notwithstanding the family connections with the new German Cæsars (marriage of Otto II. with the princess Theophano), kept the splendid ideal of Justinian before his eyes. He had won on the Danube the natural well-marked frontier, that existed in the sixth century. He had surpassed that epoch by subjugating all the Balkan littoral of the Italian sea. Servia belonged to him, Byzantine officers commanded in the inaccessible fortresses of the Pindus, in the eagle-nests of the *clissourai*. The

www.dacoromanica.ro

Albanians or "Arvanites," the Vlachs of Thessaly, whose herds passed the summer on the grassy plateaus of the Balkans, the Slavs of the Peloponnese scattered in their agricultural villages obeyed his rule. Ἄρχοντες, either native or drawn from the Greek nobility in the province, superintended and commanded these restless tribes, ready to inaugurate, through a slight dispute with the tax-collectors, a great and savage revolt, a μοῦλτος. There was one duke at Durazzo, another at Thessalonica; Constantinople used to send a "judge of Hellas." On the coast opposite, Bari, Tarento, Reggio, Otranto, Brindisi, all the great harbours of Southern Italy were now subject to the Byzantine dominion, and Basil would have wished to end his reign by an expedition into "Longibardia," intended to recover the rights of the true and ancient empire over the countries which had formerly been governed by the temporal Rome of the West.

The Southern Sea was henceforth Byzantine; and there were no more of those bold pirates, who appeared in the tenth century in the little harbours with wooden warehouses belonging to some lord or to some pious foundation, as well as in the great imperial ports with marble palaces and ancient churches glittering with gold and precious stones. The Byzantine navy had swept away the ships of the corsairs. Cyprus and Crete were incorporated into the empire. Only once more were the light vessels of the Russians of Kiev seen off Constantinople menacing to avenge some insult. The imperial galleys, armed with Greek fire, made short work of these poor fishing smacks, which were sunk under the towering walls of the Byzantine capital. The Russians remained after this lesson just as before, the good, "magnanimous" soldiers of the emperor, who employed the docile Varegs, and wielded their enormous pikes with unerring hand, at Otranto no less than in the heart of Asia. The Saracens who attacked the Cyclades under Constantine VIII. met with no better fortune than the pirates of the Grand Prince of the Dnieper; the navies of Samos and Chios sent them to the bottom of the sea; and more than once the imperial officers lined the coast with crucified Saracen pirates.

www.dacoromanica.ro

(*d*) *The Asiatic East.*—On the Eastern side, an unprecedented tranquillity prevailed. The petty States which caused disturbance had disappeared. The imperial army sent against the Saracens of Aleppo under Romanos III. (1028-1034) met with little success, but the emir of that town, a neighbour of the Byzantine duke of Antioch, offered peace. Edessa was captured. The Emir of Tripoli found asylum at Constantinople. Alexandria in Egypt itself was once plundered by Greek vessels. When Constantine Monomachos (1042-1054) made a personal expedition into Armenia, it was for the purpose of presiding over the pacific arrangement of the affairs of that country, of which he made the usurper *magister*. Persarmenia and Abasgia were easily pacified by the same system of skilful diplomacy. The Khalifate, stripped of its warlike panoply, was mouldering at Bagdad in the great halls of state, where the air was heavy with clouds of perfumes. The independent Emir of Egypt was content to hold Mount Sinaï and the strip of the littoral of Palestine, with the thrice holy city of Jerusalem; he did not even try to complete his frontier by annexing adjacent Phœnicia. The vigour of youth, the confident and daring spirit, the power of expansion, all sense of chivalrous honour, and taste for brilliant conquests had long been dead in the great old Moslem States. The Turkish brigands, under chiefs of patriarchal caste, Begs of simple habits, roamed in the Steppes of Central Asia, in the desert of sand which stretches between White Iran and Yellow China. Some of them had left the barbarian country where the shepherd led his flocks, the hunter sought his quarry, and the brigand lay in wait for the caravan, to become a soldier in Bagdad, the splendid residence of the Khalif. These fortunate adventurers were the exception; although converted to Mohammedanism, the mass of the Turks still led their happy, traditional life, between the alluring dangers of battle and the sweet tranquillity of the shepherds' *aoul*, surrounded by children and bleating flocks. The hour had not yet come when they were destined to sweep over Persia, where a Turk had established his dynasty in place of that of the Arab Shah, and to make Iran, so rich

www.dacoromanica.ro

in cities, the patrimony of the Begs, who were never weary of warfare. The guards of the lord of Persia still kept the Turks from crossing the "iron bridge" built on the Araxes. The Byzantines knew nothing of the Turks except as forming troops which the Syrian emirs enlisted against them.

(*e*) *The Army*.—This empire was defended by a fleet and a first-class army, which Basil never allowed to rust from inaction. He fought all his campaigns with "Romans," only employing in a quite subsidiary fashion the barbarians of the North, the Petcheneges, or some younger members of the old Latin families who had been stranded on the "Greek" shores. A strict surveillance had kept the officials from overstepping their duties.

(*f*) *The Imperial Power*.—The imperial authority, much shaken by the usurpations of many a preceding Cæsar and Augustus, had been completely restored. The emperor once more stood alone, superior to all influence, compulsion or danger. There were no longer any guardians, colleagues or "successors designate"; there were no more advisers, favourites and parasites who fostered suspicions and organised plots. There was no more the type of the rhetorician, philosopher, or *logios*, corresponding to the court abbot, the fashionable philosopher, or to the literary courtier of the eighteenth century. He did not even allow his brother and presumptive heir to marry his three daughters, the eldest of whom took the veil, while the two others, Zoë and Theodora, confined to their *gynekaion*, lived an existence not less dull than that of a convent. Only some miserable eunuchs, who could not have any lofty aspirations, were admitted into close friendship with the emperor. The *autocrator* was kept informed by an infallible police, and any suspected usurpers were blinded.

www.dacoromanica.ro

CHAPTER V

THE BASILIAN EMPIRE DOWN TO THE AGE OF THE COMNENI

(*a*) *The Successors of Basil II.*—Thanks to this iron discipline enforced in the court, the army, and even on the populace of Constantinople itself, once so redoubtable, Basil was able to transmit the power to his brother Constantine, an affable *fainéant*, grown old in the most complete indolence. This worthy septuagenarian, when he became sole emperor, continued to play at dice, dreaming of the countless amours of his youth. The imperial police continued to hunt for suspects whose eyes were to be torn out. Constantine, the namesake of his ancestor, the philosophic Porphyrogenitus, married Zoë, his eldest daughter, who was heir to the empire, with Romanus surnamed Argyropoulos, of the patrician family of the Argyri. He had awaited his last moments before settling this marriage.

From 1028 to 1034, after the three years of Constantine's reign, there was a new era of peace. Romanus was a "philosopher," influenced by the new ideas of the time. For the school of Bardas, and the literary activity of Photios had produced their results and had created at Byzantium a true "new spirit," which was destined to lead to the creation of the great Mousaion of Constantine Monomachos, a school of law and philosophy, far surpassing the old one. The director of this school, the "president of the philosophers," the most erudite man of letters of his day, the head of the λόγιοι, was Constantine Psellos, the literary glory of that age. The new spirit is typified in that rich and restless personality, who, with all his cleverness, had nothing noble or great about him. The rhetoric pure and simple, the curiosity for the natural sciences, and the dialectic put at the service of theology were then only subsidiary or preparatory occupations. The principal object of the "logios," who ought to be a great rhetorician, a naturalist, a fair theologian

www.dacoromanica.ro

and a little of a physician, was to be thoroughly acquainted with the exchange of ideas in Hellenic antiquity, which then enjoyed universal regard among cultivated people who "had studied." Aristotle was not sufficient; he was too much of a formalist, and people had made a compromise of him by mixing him continually with the disputes of the schools of theology; the eleventh century of the Christian era ventured to contemplate at Byzantium the "Divine Plato" himself. The Christian dogma, from which it could not emancipate itself, stood apart, and writers borrowed from Plato, whose system they followed right into the works of the mystics, all his turn of thought, all that idealistic, though somewhat vague and thin, impetuosity. Such, by dint of persistence, was Psellos; such were, in a less degree, the other contemporary men of letters. Panegyrics were showered on those of the emperors who, like that old Romanus, had tasted of the revived Hellenic philosophy. This society, relying on the everlasting duration of the newly restored imperial fabric, seemed to believe that the time was now come to abandon itself, as in a new Athens, to the rich luxurious life and the subtle discussions of these antique cities, which could not be enough admired. A fresh breath of renaissance blew over the old miasma-haunted Byzantium.

(*b*) *Government of the Empresses Porphyrogenitae, Zoë and Theodora.*—Romanus III. had not troubled to associate with him in the imperial power the Princess Zoë, a bride at the age of fifty. He had banished from the palace and interned in a monastery Theodora, the sister of Zoë, and a co-heiress to the empire. The illness from which the emperor was suffering was ascribed to the vengeance of Zoë, and when he was found dead in his bath (1034) public opinion believed in a crime which, after all, could only have shortened the life of Romanus by a few months. The assassin is said to have been the handsome courtier Michael, a Paphlagonian by origin, an ordinary workman, whom his brother had induced to enter the palace. The patriarch John was forced to come that very night of Holy Thursday, when the old

www.dacoromanica.ro

emperor died, and celebrate the marriage of the sexagenarian widow with her young favourite.

These unsavoury incidents mark a decadence of the imperial authority through the degradation or insignificance of the persons who exercised it. The dynastic principle, so firmly established by Basil, had the following disastrous consequences: the dissolute reign of Zoë, the timid reign of Theodora, and after their disappearance, the rapid and unhappy series of *adopted* emperors who did not always end as emperors. The epileptic Paphlagonian soon fell into a decline, and died long before old age. He could be seen passing in the festivals of Constantinople like a pitiable shadow of the robust and flourishing gallant that he had been, and pious people thought to recognise in his misfortunes the penalty of his crimes. He commanded Zoë to adopt his nephew, a second Michael, who had the popular nickname of Kalaphates on account of the trade of caulking which his father is supposed to have followed.

This youth wished to keep Zoë at a distance, and he even drove her out of the palace. The dynastic feelings of the people revolted, and a patriarch, nobles of the Senate, and chiefs of the army were found to organise a revolt, for Zoë, as representing the legitimist idea, was not without suitors for her hand, although a widow for the second time. Michael was abandoned, captured, and, for the first time for years, an emperor was blinded at Constantinople, in the presence of a savage mob which gloated over the agonies of its lord (1042). The imperial power had taken another downward step.

Theodora, dragged from the monastery by a band of rebels, had been proclaimed Empress. Zoë knew how to get rid of her. She immediately took a third husband, Constantine IX., surnamed Monomachos (1042-1054). He was another of the *πολῖται*, the senators, who started by largesses to the people and cut down the expenditure on the army.

The new régime of military economy and heavy taxes which was intended to supply the gifts to the people and the construction of gorgeous churches, the system of the strictly

www.dacoromanica.ro

Constantinopolitan emperors, of the Oriental sovereigns shut up in their capital and in their sacred palace, had already brought about results. Towards the year 1040, even before twenty years had elapsed since the death of the great Bulgaroktonos, the revolts in the provinces, headed no longer by native chiefs, but by the guests, the wards, the foreign-born functionaries of the Byzantine Court, had begun.

(*c*) *Revolt of Servia.*—Servia gave the signal. About 1034 Stephen, surnamed Voïslav, headed an insurrection in the Dalmatian region of Zenta and Stagno, near the then flourishing commercial town of Ragusa. Captured by the imperialists, he returned to his kingdom and was able to hold his own there. A Byzantine army, surprised in the defiles, was destroyed at Dioclea. Michaïlas, his son, concluded a peace with the emperor, which left him in possession of Southern Servia.

(*d*) *Revolt of Bulgaria.*—The Bulgarian Boyars of bygone time were now scattered almost everywhere with their families. They were bound by no ties to their country, and did not contemplate at first a renovation of their national empire. It was with surprise then that Byzantium received the news that Peter, surnamed Delianus, grandson of the emperor Samuel, having left the capital, had raised disturbances on the side of Belgrade and the river Morawa, in modern Danubian Servia. He was probably supported by the Hungarians, and maintained friendly relations with the people of Zenta, the Vlachs of the mountains, who were destined once again to be the combatants of the Bulgarian restorer. The garrison of Durazzo could not prevent the spread of the disturbances; after some time this residence of the Byzantine duke fell into the power of the Bulgarians. Other chieftains asserted their independence; one Tichomir, who was killed, Ivatzes, Alusianus, a Byzantine dignitary, honoured with the title of patrician, who inhabited Theodosiopolis and prided himself on being the younger son of the old "Comitopoule" Aaron. Delianus promised the re-establishment of the ancient prestations of the times of liberty, when the subjects of the Bulgarian prince only gave a hogshead of corn, one of millet,

www.dacoromanica.ro

and a measure of wine for each yoke of oxen they used, and, consequently, for the *zygos* of land which they ploughed. The emperor Monomachos, who happened to be at Thessalonica, fled before the mutineers, and the great town was besieged by the "Bulgarians." But dissensions finally broke out; Delianus' eyes were put out by his enemies, Alusianus submitted to the imperial troops, and Ivatzes fell into their power.

(*e*) *Proclamation of Maniakes.*—When Zoë took Monomachos as a consort to the throne, that is to say, when the empress consented to abdicate the power into the hands of that courtier, native of Constantinople, general disaffection broke out among the officers in every province. Constantine was imprudent enough to drive to extremities the best soldier the empire then possessed, George Maniakes, the conqueror of Edessa, an Asiatic whom Zoë had named "strategus plenipotentiary" of Sicily and Southern Italy, recently invaded by Norman adventurers. He won over some Italians, and even a prince who had come from Norway and was destined to be a king himself, Harald Hardrada, and energetically defended the land of the emperor; he was even able to re-conquer Messina. Monomachos feared the reputation and the talents of that general, and he recalled him. Maniakes then donned the purple, and he might be seen disembarking at Durazzo with his Frankish "pages," the Francopouli. He died in the moment of victory over the army sent to fight him. But, while the Normans obstinately pursued their work of conquest in the Two Sicilies, the Maniakites wandered long in those Western regions, where their brilliant chief had died in the fray.

(*f*) *The Petcheneges cross the Danube.*—It was at this juncture that the Uzes or Cumans reached the Danube and the Petcheneges split up before the menace of this danger which threatened them from these kinsmen formerly left behind in the steppe. The Khan Kegen, who had made all the Petchenege chiefs obey his orders, found a rival in Tyrach, who commanded one of the tribes. Turn by turn in their desperate struggle, the followers of the rebel and those of the Khan passed the Danube on the side of the

www.dacoromanica.ro

Dobroudscha. The arrival of these soldiers of the advance guard, who were so inexpensive, was a godsend to Byzantium. They baptised the very barbarians, still quite out of their element in this new world, which they had only known by their old depredations. The chiefs were loaded with beautiful silk dresses and fine Byzantine titles; they were forced to obtain estates by solemn privileges, the *chrysobules*. But when they were sent to Asia against the Turks, they turned to the right-about without even having seen the enemy, and fording the sea, they set to work to devastate in a terrible fashion the regions on the coast of the Black Sea. The Cumans were not long in arriving by way of Vidin, and they traversed the peninsula as far as Thessalonica.

The empire had once more to make up its mind to bargain, to bribe, to subsidise and to conclude treaties with these incorrigible barbarians, whose soul had not been changed by a superficial Christianity. They remained masters of whole regions which still figured nominally on the registers of the administration and finances. The Petchenege chiefs thus resided a long time at Prêslav, the Capital of the ancient empire of Bulgaria. Thanks to their proximity and their joint help, the Bulgarian chiefs, perhaps also the Roumanians, seized the still flourishing Danubian towns, which were once more detached from "Romania"; one of these *toparchs*, Tatos, long maintained himself in a strong situation. Supported also by the Cumans and the Hungarians, he could not even be dislodged by the personal expedition of the emperor Isaac Comnenus. The Byzantine dignitary Nestor, who was sent to destroy the Silistriote and his allies, ended by making common cause with them.

(*g*) *New Bulgarian Movements*.—Under the reign of Michael Ducas, called the Parapinakios, or broker (1071-1078), there was a new Bulgarian revolt. The chiefs of this nation, but not those who governed near the Danubian Petcheneges, asked Michaïlas, the sovereign of the Serbs of the Adriatic—who had extended, as it seems, the frontiers as far as the Hungarian kingdom—to furnish them with an emperor. Michaïlas gave them his own son, Constantine, called

www.dacoromanica.ro

Bodin, who assumed as a Bulgarian emperor the new name of Peter.

It is possible even that this Servian king fostered the movement. The revolt gained Skopi, Kastoria, Prespa, the ancient residence of Samuel; it then advanced along the mountain, supported certainly by the Vlachs, the Albanians, and the remnants of the Maniakites. The winter favoured its progress. It was only thanks to the Francopouli that the empire could regain its rights in these regions. Bodin Peter, taken prisoner and exiled into Asia, was delivered by the Venetian merchants, and he was later the successor of his father in Servia. As Servian king, Bodin did not forget his ancient ambition, and supported by his Croats, whose country prospered, by the pirates of Dioclea, by the Petcheneges and Cumans and the Hungarians, he ventured twice, at the time of the accession of Alexius Comnenus, 1081, to attack Nish (Naissus) and Skopi.

(*b*) *Military Revolt of Basilakios.*—Some years after, a Byzantine pretender, Basilakios, revived Maniakes' career as rebel and was defeated with his Francopouli, Albanians and Vlachs near Thessalonica. At this epoch, a little before the new era of the dynasty of the Comneni, there was a rebel, of the Paulician religion, at Philippopolis, who bore the Albanian name of Lekas, and Mesembria, being disloyal towards the empire, chose for chief a Bulgar called Dobromir.

(*i*) *Proclamation of the Emperor Leo Tornikios.*—In the province a separatist tendency was also observable in Macedonia, among the "Rhomaioi" near Philippopolis, Andrinople, and the towns of the littoral, Selembria, Rhodostos, Panion. An officer of Asiatic origin, Leo Tornikios, had been degraded and shorn like a monk. The great proprietors of the Macedonian *theme*, persons very rich and powerful—a whole town, Rhodostos, was, so to speak, the property of the powerful family of Batatzes—took him with them and fled from Constantinople. Leo, soon proclaimed emperor, seized the whole of Macedonia. He did not hesitate to lay siege to Constantinople, and the inhabitants of the imperial town had during weeks of anxiety every opportunity to see the usurper,

www.dacoromanica.ro

magnificently apparelled and armed, making the round of the walls, with a sumptuous retinue, while his army heaped insults and curses on the poor old Monomachos. The latter was quite in his dotage, so ill and worn out had he become, thanks to the pleasures of power, to the beautiful Skleraina, the Iberian slaves of royal race and others, and hardly seemed to understand what was said to him. There was a moment when Constantinople seemed certain to fall, but fortune preferred the gouty Constantine to the luxurious Leo. The usurper and his principal supporter, Batatzes, were blinded, and the latter uttered, during this terrible punishment, these few words worthy of the best days of antiquity—"The Roman empire loses a good soldier in me."

(*j*) *The Thracian Emperor Bryennius.*—Once more Macedonia showed its preferences and its intentions when it proclaimed, in opposition to Michael Ducas, the general Nicephorus Bryennius. This second Macedonian usurper held his own also against the pretender coming from Asia, Nicephorus Botaniates, and was finally blinded by the latter's order.

When, however, they learnt of Nicephorus's mutilation, part of the Constantinopolitan garrison rose against Botaniates, who with difficulty escaped their anger.

But what militated against the governments of the capital, palace and antechamber was the state of that Asia which had long formed the most flourishing and most interesting part of the empire.

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW TURKISH DANGER

(*a*) *Appearance of Turkish Bands in Persia.*—Towards the middle of the eleventh century the Turks had finally passed the "iron bridge" over the Araxes. They had become masters of Persia by a great victory. Togrul, grandson of Seldschouk, their Beg, styled himself Iranian Sultan. The

www.dacoromanica.ro

Khalif of Bagdad stood at his commands. Lords of wide fields and countless villages, the old chiefs, the robbers of the desert, had become leaders of many little armies, always ready to fight for honour, gain, or merely for the pleasure of it.

They were destined to revive with a different national temperament, with the vigour of a young nation which had no ties nor permanent interests, and of a chivalrous people which was impatient of all strict organisation and all constraint, the era of the ancient wars between Asia Minor and Iran, in order to win the dominion of the intermediary countries of the Caucasus and Mesopotamia.

Armenian Vaspourakhan, Persarmenia which was feebly held, and Iberia which was still flourishing, were attacked; the great halting-place for the caravans Erz, near Theodosiopolis, was destroyed; the Iberian satrap, Liparite, was taken, and immediately set free by the sultan, who always showed himself chivalrous towards the conquered. Ani was conquered later by the sultan himself; but the latter intervened rarely, and he had already offered peace to the people of *Roum* if they chose to condescend to pay him a tribute, which was at first refused. The plundering hordes played mostly for their own hand; they were soon to be seen in Mesopotamia. Under Eudocia, widow of Constantine Ducas, they arrived in Syria, where they formed bands of brotherly friendship with the Saracen chiefs of his country, hitherto subject to the imperialists. Cæsarea was taken, and Antioch was often in danger.

(*b*) *The State of the Byzantine Army.*—The empire could no longer put in the field against them an army competent to bar the passes, to hunt out the robber-bands, or make long and rapid marches in order to bring help to menaced places. For that they would have needed loyal provincials, well-armed and equipped, supplied with good horses, or disciplined *stratiotai* willing to wage a perpetual war for the defence of their own lands. But in order to have money with which to glut the favourites and feed the idleness of the plebs of Constantinople, the ἀργοὶ and the πένητες, who lounged under the porticoes of the great city, recourse was had not only to

www.dacoromanica.ro

the monopoly of the sale of wheat, which won for Michael Ducas the nickname of Parapinakes, but also to the compensation which each proprietor of *stratiotic* land was at liberty to pay to avoid military service. The result was that only those who could not pay into the treasury that military tax or *stratia* appeared after the proclamation of the imperial ban, under the command of the *strategi* who were never allowed to remain long in the same place for fear of usurpation.

(*c*) *Battle of Mantzikert and Capture of Romanus Diogenes* (1071).—This was the army which the Emperor Romanus Diogenes thrice led against the Turks. The third, his own soldiers, betrayed him in every way, thanks also to the intrigues which were hatched at Constantinople, where the empress and her son, Michael Ducas, wished to get rid of a troublesome husband and guardian. At Mantzikert he fought for a long time single-handed, and then fell into the power of the sultan (1071). This latter received him like a prince, made him sit at the same table, and having concluded a perpetual peace with him, sent him back, decked in rich Oriental robes. The Byzantines gave him a reception worthy of their moral degradation; they took up arms against him, and put out his eyes in so cruel a fashion that he died from the punishment.

(*d*) *Turkish power in Asia Minor.*—One of the results of this brutal crime was the rupture of the treaty with the Turks, and soon, after some fresh victories over the miserable imperial armies, they were seen everywhere, on every high-road, at Iconium, Nicea, Chrysopolis, Chalcedon, in front of Constantinople, which remained Greek simply owing to the arrangements concluded with the tribal chieftains. All Iberia, Armenia, and the coast of Trebizond now belonged to the robber-bands. In order to have the throne, Nicephorus Botaniates (1078-1081) was obliged to ally himself with them, and the inhabitants of Constantinople could hear during the night the harsh Turkish drums celebrating the victory in the camp of the barbarians at Chrysopolis. When Nicephorus Melissenus, a relation of the Comneni, revolted in his turn for the glory of being emperor, he once more

www.dacoromanica.ro

addressed himself to the Turks and entrusted them with the defence of the places which acknowledged him. During this time the chiefs, Mansour and Soliman, the sons of Coutloumouz, were perhaps still in Europe, where they had helped to defeat and capture Bryennius. The Turks of Melissenus fought the imperialists commanded by an eunuch before the walls of Nicea, which, like the other Asiatic towns, paid tribute to the barbarians. There was not yet a Turkish State of Roum; the marauding bands which swarmed unceasingly from Persia had no cohesion; they did not care to live in the towns which they took merely to draw revenue from them; the emirs spent a roving life and did not recognise a sultan established in his capital. The Turkish organisation in Asia Minor was destined to come later.

Nicephorus was still hopeful of driving out these imperial guests, but the troops which he sent revolted, and this was the last attempt made against the people of Seldjouk. Some time before the Duke of Antioch, Isaac Comnenus, had fallen into the power of the Turks who invested Syria and was forced to pay a large ransom in golden *besants*.

(*e*) *Military Emperors—Isaac Comnenus, Romanus Diogenes.*—Generals had tried to save the empire to satisfy their own ambition. Once more we see commanders (*strategi*) of the East, like Phocas and Tzimiskes successfully intriguing for the crown. After the death of Monomachos and the few months of the reign of his sister-in-law Theodora (1054-6), Isaac Comnenus, member of a great Asiatic family, replaced the aged Michael Stratiotikos who, as he looked at his scarlet buskins, said with a sigh: "Michael will not shed blood for this," and abdicated (1057). But Isaac, who was represented as a soldier on his coins, an innovation, did not enjoy a long reign; after an expedition to the Danube which was badly planned and badly carried out, he died from the results of a chill caught out hunting, a sport of which he was passionately fond. He nominated as his successor the highly competent lawyer Constantine Ducas (1059), and the latter nominated his wife Eudocia to the throne. She found her-

www.dacoromanica.ro

self compelled to share the power by marrying with an officer named Romanus Digenis, or in the Hellenic fashion, Diogenes (1067), who had also fought on the Danube. He was the defeated commander at Mantzikert, and Michael, the eldest son of Eudocia, gave orders that he should lose his eyes. Another Asiatic general then, Nicephorus Botaniates, who claimed to be a descendant of the Phocas family and even of the Fabii, deposed this young monster, took his throne (1078) and wife, and made him a monk and subsequently an archbishop. He himself found rivals in his two colleagues. The one, Melissenus, was roaming in Asia, in the provinces which, ravaged and occupied by the Turks, were no longer able to place an emperor on the throne. The other was the young Alexios Comnenus, who at first did his best for his emperor against the pretenders, but finally treacherously introduced into Constantinople an army of Macedonians and of barbarians from Europe, which gave him the power (April 1, 1081).

www.dacoromanica.ro

BOOK IV

The Growth of the Latin Element

CHAPTER I

CONDITION OF THE EMPIRE AT THE END OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

(*a*) *New Allies of the Empire: Turks and Latins.*—The empire had thought to find in these difficult circumstances a new category of defenders in the *Francopouli*, who have been already mentioned. Except for some adventurers of very high lineage who followed their profession as Viking before wearing a crown, only the Normans of middle class, who, like the Greeks in Italy, had learnt the language and become familiarised with the customs of the country, crossed the sea and proffered their services as mercenaries, ἰδιόξενοι, to the Byzantines. But in the second half of the century Germans also, Ἀλαμάνοι, Νέμιτζοι, arrived, together with Italians, who were commonly called "Lombards" or Longibardopouli. Their poverty and the want of occupation in the West, which began to be overstocked with its supply of knights, made them very modest in the terms they asked; they only received ordinarily food and dress, ἄρτιον καὶ ἱμάτιον. At most their chiefs were promoted to the dignity of *spatharius*, or merely of *acting spatharius*. Some remained at Constantinople itself; others were sent into the countries infested by the enemy, and they were distributed among the small garrisons. They brought there the customs, the manner of life and the behaviour of the Western, the feudal customs. These Franks, notwithstanding a notable difference of civilisation and the influence of Christianity, of which they were the most devoted followers, resembled the

www.dacoromanica.ro

Turks with whom they were sent to fight. Like them, they loved adventures and tough contests, nor did they despise booty; like them, they put honour before everything, but they could not resist the temptation of adroit treachery, and they resembled them in their boldness, their pride and inconstancy.

The empire thus derived no very great benefit from them. If in Bulgaria, they took Prespa, they plundered it even down to the sacred images; if they got rid of some few pretenders, they became in Asia the comrades-in-arms of some Turk of noble lineage and boundless valour; they neglected the orders they had received and fought for their own hand. Without asking permission, they took up their abode in the remote castles which they were ready to defend against any who might have ventured to show signs of attacking them; they took prisoners and were taken prisoners themselves; they received and paid ransoms; they were shut up almost everywhere, tortured, and then summoned to bring help; on one occasion Oursel (Roussel) de Bailleul, the comrade of a Hervé and a Crispin, laid siege to Constantinople with his 3000 Franks and proclaimed an emperor.

The Greeks hated them, but were forced to have recourse to them. They went even farther. In order to get rid of the Turks, they proposed an alliance to their great enemy, Duke Robert of Sicily. A marriage between the two dynasties had even been arranged. There was talk, in the regions bordering on the Adriatic, of an impending descent of the great "Lombard."

An important chapter in the international relations of the empire began. It was destined to find a natural sequel in the crusades which were to bring the enemies of the West into collision with those of the East, and to change many conditions in the life of the empire. The reign of Alexios Comnenus prepared a new condition of things, which was settled under his second successor, Manuel, and will be seen to have produced a violent and disastrous reaction under the ignoble Andronicus Comnenus and finally to have established that Latin Empire of Constantinople, whose appearance was less unexpected than we are generally prepared to allow.

www.dacoromanica.ro

The characteristic of this epoch was, in fact, the opening of the floodgates of the West—gradually or abruptly, with peaceful or warlike intentions—whose active forces, not only in the comparatively small world of chivalry but in the masses generally, poured over the East, weakened, impoverished and decimated as it was by the long Turkish and Petchenege wars of the eleventh century, and by the ruinous results of the imperial concentration.

In order to understand the transformation produced by this inroad, we must first consider the condition in which the "Middle Empire" of Thrace and Asia Minor—the Macedo-Anatolian State, that is, of the three last centuries—now was on the accession of the Comneni.

(*b*) *State of the Empire on the Accession of Alexios Comnenus: Destruction of the Petcheneges.*—Provincial life was certainly dying out. This was a natural consequence of the new invasions and the persistent brigandage which characterised them. The robber tribes now took the place of the old migratory tribes, who were looking for a home and lands. The Petcheneges, Cumans or Uzes, and Turcomans, those different representatives of the "nomad" race of the Turks, and those ugly little Scythians were precisely alike on this one point. They did not wish to settle down; their field of conquest was only the region in which they might strip the subjects of the empire, take ransoms from the townsfolk, and exact tribute, the *kharadj*, from the natives who had submitted and recognised the necessity of the "barbarian" government.

The Petcheneges were nearing their end. They were in a state of continual unrest, which it is easy to understand, if we reflect that their ancient hegemony over the peasants of the Danube and the shepherds of the Carpathians, had passed to their more vigorous and younger kinsmen the Cumans. The two "nations" combined after all, for we find a Petchenege tribe following one of the Cuman tribes to war. In spite of this military amalgamation, this brotherhood of brigandage, they could easily be distinguished one from the other; but it was impossible for the Byzantines

www.dacoromanica.ro

even those of them who were familiar with the Danubian regions, to perceive any difference. They looked on, half anxiously, half wonderingly, at the incessant aggregation and segregation of the Scythian "unities" which composed the tribes of the Trans-Danubian barbarians. It mattered little to the provincials whether they paid ransom to the old Turk or to the new Turk. Officers of experience sometimes were to be found in that welter of dreaded foes which fell like an avalanche from Silistria and Vidin almost as far as Andrinople and the environs of Constantinople itself. They fanned the flames of jealousy between the chiefs who were dividing the power. This was one of the effective ways of fighting the danger, for the brilliant campaigns of Alexios and John Comnenus ended in a disastrous fashion, thus affording the barbarians the spectacle of a *basileus* flying before their light horsemen, holding in his hand like an old and awkward garment the great banner of the empire. The well-planned raids and the long wars of the small parties of horsemen had more completely effected their object. After having thus weakened these untiring foes by bribery and ambuscades it was finally possible to fall on them in a great and sanguinary battle at Lebounion (1091). A popular song, current in the villages which the Petcheneges had often pillaged, lamented the tragic fate of these barbarians, who, dying on the threshold of May, saw but for one day the beauties of the world in spring.

Many of the Cumans undoubtedly shared the fate of their brethren. Even if Manuel Comnenus (1143-1180) still continued to make campaigns against the Scythians on the other side of the Danube, and once even among the Carpathians, the Cumans were no longer a lasting menace to the Northern frontier. Since one of their chiefs bore the name of Lazarus, we must conclude that Christianity, the religion of their Roman subjects, had at last reached them.

At that phase in their history such a change of religion was calculated to hasten their dissolution. But we may imagine the condition, about the year 1100, of those villages in Mœsia and Thrace which had been so often threatened,

www.dacoromanica.ro

or of those towns like Philippopolis of the Paulicians, which the Emperor Alexios had just devastated by purging it of the Manichean heresy. Those regions, henceforward free from the raiders, did not however obtain any respite from the visits of the tax-collectors, who demanded the καπνικόν, the *stratia*, the tithe, the *corvée* and other imposts; the empire was too hard pressed on every side to be able to grant from humanity and pity that truce which had been earned by years of misery. The distress was, however, sometimes so intense that persons might be seen surrendering themselves to the great lords, to escape the καπνικόν and other State taxes; these γυμνοί or "naked" peasants, who were to be met with in masses throughout the empire, found the Norman rule more bearable than these fiscal sufferances, and preferred the rule of the Turks, who supplied far more humane proprietors to the abandoned fields.

(*c*) *The Provinces of Asia and the Turkish Invasion.*—On the accession of Alexios Comnenus the Turks were spread over the whole of Asia and Syria, while they possessed Persia, the desert, Mesopotamia and Egypt. A large number of towns obeyed them; Nicea had long been their tributary. In the last days of his reign Botaniates received the bad news that Cyzicus had followed this example. Bandit chiefs had ensconced themselves even in the ruins which lined the coast facing Constantinople. These "masters of Asia" were the pests of every high-road and no journey was possible without constant payment of ransom. They had chiefs whom they honoured by the title of emirs, and were called by the learned Byzantine writers satraps and archisatraps.

(*d*) *The Sultan of Nicea.*—Certain tribes had even proclaimed a sultan in the person of Soliman, who "inhabited" Nicea, that is to say he had quarters in that town. That sultan depended, however, on the Grand Sultan of Persia, and when Toutoush, Emir of Syria, vicegerent of that prince, marched against him, Soliman was abandoned by his own men and succumbed. This Sultan of Nicea, Soliman, son of Coutloumouz and descendant of that glorious ancestor

www.dacoromanica.ro

Seldjouk, had been called to Antioch in Syria, as conqueror, by the son of the governor, an Armenian. It was this new conquest which brought him into collision with the powerful Toutoush and led to his death. Before starting for his last campaign this Soliman had left a lieutenant at Nicea. Other emirs were in command at Sinope, Nicomedia and elsewhere, who cared little for what the sultan wished.

(*e*) *The "emperor" Tzachas at Smyrna.* — A certain Tzachas, an ex-Turcopoulos, or Turkish mercenary in the service of Byzantium, of whom there were many, wearing the dress and arms and speaking the language of his new country, had established himself in Smyrna, and had commanded the native Greeks to build him a fleet which rendered him redoubtable, and had carved out for himself a small kingdom off the coast and the islands. He remained constantly at Smyrna, where he kept his household and his riches; he governed in the Roman style, such as it existed at the time when he defended the empire. As for the others, they led the nomad life of their ancestors, they won and lost again the towns which remained Greek so far as the inhabitants went—there were not even permanent garrisons, they intrigued among themselves, stuffed themselves with food, and drank as long as peace lasted, and piqued themselves on the beauty of the inmates of their seraglio. From time to time an ambassador of the Great Sultan, or perhaps the son of the Sultan Soliman, some Seldjouk prince, or some other Seldjouk officer, appeared with a splendid little army of active Turcomans, who did not know what were the civilised charms of the "Roum." Then he would go off in search of new adventures, and Asia Minor remained what it had been the last fifty years, the realm of roaming bandits, in the midst of which were some towns more or less loyal, or some *strategi* more or less subdued, who sent no tribute to Byzantium.

(*f*) *Provincials and Turkish robbers.*—The population had gradually got accustomed to them, just as the Syrian population, four centuries earlier, to the Arabs; and possibly they paid less in presents to the nearest Turkish chieftain than in taxes to the *basileus*, whom they were hardly anxious to see

www.dacoromanica.ro

again. There are no proofs that the Turks tried to impose their religion on the subjects they gained, and since the Roman peasant kept his Christ and his saints, he had all that he wanted. It was a reproduction of the Western feudal system, with towns paying the lord his rights, with castles, and serfs liable to tallage and the *corvée*, and lords who never resided on their estates, but were for ever busied in reaping a harvest on the high roads. The empire looked on impotently at this sight; it could only meet raid by raid and pursue one set of bandits by another. To retake the towns to-day was to lose them again to-morrow. Had it been possible to destroy the army of one Seldjouk prince, Chorassan, Mesopotamia, or Syria would have sent another the next day, for the race of brigands appeared inexhaustible. The sole noteworthy success before the arrival of the Crusaders was the recapture of the islands occupied by Tzachas and the submission of some other islands which had revolted, in a word the re-establishment of the Eastern θαλασσοκρατία.

(*g*) *The Emperor Alexios Comnenus and his relations.*—It must be acknowledged that with the occupation of the soil of Asia by the Turks the great proprietors of other days disappeared; they realised their property and sought refuge at Constantinople. With the withdrawal of the armies of the East the race of generals who aspired to the throne died out. The dynastic principle, imposed by Basil II., was continually strengthened. Nicephorus Botaniates had felt the necessity of legitimatising his usurpation by a legend, which made him a descendant of Phocas and even of the Fabii of Rome. Alexios Comnenus was the nephew of an emperor, the son of a prince who had for sometime been considered the heir to the throne; he was also related to the Ducas, and his wife, Irene, was a daughter of that family; he had been given preference over his elder brother, Isaac, on account of that superiority in his dynastic titles, and one of the conspirators did not scruple to say that it was for Irene Ducas that he had worked, and that she must be proclaimed Augusta on the spot. If for the future there were conspiracies with a view to the throne, they were only contemptible plots,

www.dacoromanica.ro

which one might easily guess to have been inspired by members of the imperial family. Alexios had much to suffer, to the very end, from his relations; he seldom, however, inflicted capital punishment, and never blinded anyone, contenting himself with ignominiously parading the culprits that could be prosecuted; their hair and beards were cut off, and their ambitious heads were surrounded with garlands of gut; but nothing further was done. There were not even any persons made monks against their will. This is a proof that the dynastic sentiment was firmly established. The emperors now dared to lead their little armies in person; they could even fly without their defeat entailing any consequences for their life or their power. There was a new army, and that army belonged to them.

(*b*) *His Army.*—Alexios ought to be considered the creator of this army. He employed the foreign auxiliaries, the loyal Varegs, the Νέμιτζοι, the Norman "Lombards," the "Celts" of France, the English adventurers; he made great use of the Turcopouli, whether baptised or not, who won many successes for him, and he always had in his service corps of light-armed Petcheneges, who acted to some degree as police in the camps; there were even levies of Vlachs. But, in addition to these strangers he organised picked corps, composed solely of Greeks. By the side of the Chomatians and the "Immortals," both of whom came from Asiatic sources and represented the last fragments of the army of the East, there was under this reign, and thanks to the emperor, a corps consisting of the sons of soldiers, who had been brought up in the precincts of the palace; they were thoroughly ready to fight, and absolutely devoted to the emperor, who was their general and encouraged them in battle by calling them by name. These were the 2000 Greek cadets or *Archontopouli*, the nucleus of the new army and its principal prop. New and splendid titles, and even crowns, were granted to certain members of the imperial family, to the generals and the officials of repute in order to keep them to their duty and secure their loyalty in the command of the armies. To be *Sebastokrator*, *Panhypersebastos* or *Droungario-*

www.dacoromanica.ro

Sebastes, satisfied most of those ambitious spirits who would otherwise have become traitors and have taken up arms.

(*i*) *Religious Policy*.—At the same time, under Alexios himself and his two first successors, a fresh religious movement spread through the society which the emperors of Constantinople, and the writers, philosophers and jurists of the eleventh century seemed to wish to bring back to the enlightened paganism of Plato and his mystics. There are once more measures enforced against the heretics. An entire school, based on Psellos, that of the monk Italos, the second "Proedros of the philosophers," which held some fanciful and iconoclastic notions, was prosecuted by the government and exterminated. A new imperial ordinance strictly settled the dogma. A simple and resolute patriarch, Eustratios Garidas, was given office in order to watch over the heresies. The propaganda of the Bogomiles, whose doctrine had won many adherents, thanks to the power of the dialectic which their chief Basil employed, was now prohibited. Men were burnt at the stake at Constantinople, just as at Rome or in Spain. Niphon, who attacked the "God of the Jews," had to suffer for his ideas, and as the patriarch Cosmas had allowed himself to be seduced, he was banished. A patriarch chosen from Antioch shared the same fate. The last representative of Byzantine Neo-Platonism, Demetrius, had his lips sealed by the order of the court. A proclamation was issued that the emperor only, "on account of his dignity," had the right to state his opinion on questions concerning the dogma.

Once more in the triumphal processions the image of the Virgin was enthroned on the silver car, before which the victorious emperor walked on foot. Manuel Comnenus carried on his shoulders the stone on which could be distinguished the congealed tears of the Virgin. The army would not set out before demanding the "accustomed miracle" at the Panagia of the Blachernes. When a battle was imminent, lots were drawn on the book of the Gospels by the emperor after a night spent in prayer. The eve of the combat, tapers were burning on the points of the lances.

www.dacoromanica.ro

But into this society, which needed fresh blood in order that it might not die out, a new force was now slowly spreading—the spirit and ideals of the Latins.

CHAPTER II

BYZANTIUM, ROME AND THE NORMANS

(*a*) *Latin Warriors at Byzantium.*—The relations of Byzantium with the West had long been represented by the Greek rule in Italy and by the mercenaries and Frankish adventurers who were serving in the imperial armies. The way in which the Westerns wore their hair in long locks, their tight-fitting dress, which seemed vulgar and indecent, their long pointed shoes, their heavy chain-armour, their ponderous lances and huge tapering shields, their impetuosity, their loquacity, their unfeigned love for beautiful objects in gold and silver, for the splendid *numismata* of the emperors, their French or German tongue, and even their national character, were familiar to the whole world.

(*b*) *Italian Merchants in the Eastern Empire.*—Thanks to the "Lombard" rule of the imperialists, citizens of Amalfi were settled in the cities and towns of the empire and even at Constantinople; the Venetians soon arrived in their turn by way of Dalmatia, with their wealth, their business capacities and adventurous courage. Under Alexios I., Durazzo, the residence of the Western duke, was in most respects a Venetian town; the capital had also a large population of Venetian merchants. For the moment they rendered great services and were in no sense invaders. Their doge, honoured with Byzantine titles, had, notwithstanding his aspirations in Dalmatia, a rôle assigned to him in the wars which the imperial fleet was destined to wage in the West.

(*c*) *Greek Prejudice against the Latins.*—The virtues of the Latins, their intrepidity, the simplicity of their desires, their inventiveness, the superiority of their armament and their indomitable spirit were appreciated, but there was no love felt

www.dacoromanica.ro

for them. They appeared to the Byzantines as persons without education or refinement, as soldiers without strategic knowledge or definite plans, as clumsy churls who could not conform to the laws of etiquette; in a word they seemed barbarians like the Turks and Petcheneges, no less treacherous and greedy of booty than these tribes. Their emperor and their kings (*ἰμπεράτωρ, ῥῆγες*) were only usurpers, like the Persian *basileis* and the sultans.

But they were Christians. In spite of the difference in ritual, in the Church language and in particular dogmas which each side upheld without excessive discussion, a certain religious unity was maintained all this time between Rome and Byzantium, or rather between the Latin West and the Greek Orient. This communion was kept up by the fervent adoration of the same relics, by the same desire of seeing Jerusalem once more—the Byzantine crusades of Tzimiskes and Phocas were remembered, and later (1143) John Comnenus died in Cilicia grieving that he had not been able to finish his pilgrimage—and finally by the existence of a common enemy, the "Saracen" or Turk.

(*d*) *Religious Quarrels: the Great Schism.*—If we take the point of view of contemporary writers, it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the "great schism" which broke out in the time of the patriarch Michael Kerullarios. Envoys of the pope came to Constantinople during the reign of Constantine Monomachos (1042-1054), an arm-chair emperor, very weak. They had not certainly any religious mission. Constantinople could not think of imposing a new organisation or a new dogma on the Latins; Rome, even at this aggressive epoch of her policy, could not flatter herself with hopes on the point of converting the Greeks. On both sides a policy of opportunism was adopted in the desire of finding allies, and there was nothing to gain by reopening old and bitter discussions. It happened, however, that the Roman envoys imprudently wished for a discussion; they found in Kerullarios a patriarch of exceptional ability, who prided himself on making the emperors, and proclaimed as he put on the purple buskins that there was no essential difference be-

www.dacoromanica.ro

tween the Church and the empire, and that the Church was actually superior to the empire in all that concerned honour. (*ἱερωσύνης γὰρ καὶ βασιλείας τὸ διάφορον οὐδὲν, ἢ καὶ ὀλίγον εἶναι, ἐν δὲ γε τοῖς τιμιωτέροις καὶ τὸ πλέον τάχα καὶ ἐρίτιμον.*) As is apparent, he held, thanks to the continual exchange of ideas between the Greek Empire and Southern Italy, the same ideas as the Clunists and Gregory VII. with regard to the relations between the civil power and the supreme dignity of the Church; he held also the same ambitious views of a universal hierarchy. There was a new quarrel between Latins and Greeks, waged as usual by excommunications. The incident had not a large range; the clergy had adopted this way of breaking off negotiations. All the emperors who succeeded Monomachos had political relations with the pope, and among the foreign envoys might be seen from time to time those of the Roman Pontiff. "Old Rome" even summoned the *basileus* to aid her against the *imperator*, and Constantinople applied to the pope for auxiliaries against the Turks. In the end, Isaac Comnenus arrested Kerullarios because he did not please him, and had him escorted by his Varegs to a convent of Proconnesus, where he died.

The Greek Church never showed any more pretensions to the empire; on the contrary lay beneficiaries invaded the convents. The patriarchs were compelled to be content with the "centenaries" of gold which the court placed at their service and the gifts left on the altar of St. Sophia by the emperors whom they crowned or whose marriage they celebrated. Such a Head of the Church was not made to claim the sovereignty of the whole world, and the emperors had something else to do than to take upon themselves the pretensions of the clergy of Byzantium.

It was not the "great schism" which created at Constantinople an atmosphere unfavourable to the Latins on the eve of the Crusades, but the Norman Invasion.

(*e*) *Norman Policy towards Byzantium.*—The aged Robert Guiscard, in the Byzantine sense of the word, duke of the empire by a usurped title, duke of Lombardy, which he had gradually taken from the emperor, wished also to be duke of Dalmatia. He had knights at his command and a fleet, and

www.dacoromanica.ro

did not find any room for his ambition in Italy, where he would have come into collision with the pope, whom he wished to spare. He had a perfect knowledge of Byzantine affairs. First of all he had proposed a family alliance in order to be able to interfere subsequently; having attained to power, Alexios was bound to break off the treaty concluded with the emperor Michael. This afforded an excellent pretext for the war which Robert had long been preparing, to the knowledge of the Dalmatians and the neighbouring provincials. He pretended to recognise in a mysterious monk the dethroned emperor, who was to be his relation. He embarked on his fleet, hoping to impress the subjects of the empire, many of whom actually adored the charlatan, who rode proudly in golden brocade surrounded by Norman *doryphori*. Avlona and Canina, the little ports in front of Bari, were captured and Durazzo besieged. The Servian chiefs of the Continent joined the invader. The fleet was, however, defeated by the Venetians, who lost no time in sending their galleys. The hostilities dragged on, notwithstanding the distinct successes of the Norman giants over the little Petcheneges and Turks and the handful of Constantinopolitan soldiers of Alexios, who fled at the first onset. The Italian *βουργέζιοι* of Durazzo at last handed over the city.

(*f*) *Second Norman War.*—But the Norman duke was recalled by the invasion of the German Cæsar, whom Byzantium had contrived to win over. His son, Bohemond, another fair-haired giant, of indomitable courage and a true "Guiscard," the most cautious of all his contemporaries, assumed command of the army. He appears to have wished for Thessalonica. Once master of Durazzo and of that second capital of the West, he would have had nothing more to fear; the whole of Macedonia would have surrendered its valleys and *klissourai* to him; the Bulgarian empire of Samuel, Delianus and Alusianus would have come to life again in Latin dress and Norman armour. The new leader took, as he passed, imperial Ochrida and Skopi, the country of Meglen, where the Petchenege colonists were settled, and Castoria. The inhabitants everywhere hailed with acclamations this

www.dacoromanica.ro

chivalrous conquest. Bohemond made a descent on Thessaly, in the midst of the Vlachs; his goal was not far distant, but he could not reach it, for his soldiers, being adroitly solicited by the Greeks and by the emperor, who had come up and had even won some trifling victories, broke into mutiny. He went back therefore to Durazzo, whence he embarked for Salerno, vanquished, without having struck a blow. It required a different army from that of feudal vassals, adventurers and cheaply-hired Italian mercenaries to accomplish a task of such importance. Unfortunately for him, Bohemond went away without this salutary conviction being brought home to him.

Robert wished to resume the campaign at once. He was faced again by the Venetians, who won three victories, while the Normans could only claim one maritime success. The aged duke had attacked Cephalonia and seemed to wish now to hold his own in another military project, the conquest of the Ionian Islands and the Morea. He did not live to see the loss of his brilliant conquest, for he died on the island which he had invaded.

CHAPTER III

THE CRUSADERS AT CONSTANTINOPLE

(*a*) *Proclamation of the First Crusade.*—A few years after these events Pope Urban II. proclaimed at the Council of Clermont, before the crowd assembled in the great square, a general expedition of Catholic Christians for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. Crosses of red cloth were distributed to his listeners, who, fired by an extraordinary enthusiasm, due to the reiterated propaganda of the popes in recent times of war against the German empire, shouted, "Dieu le veut." (November 1095).

There was no real organisation of this movement. The pope contented himself with indicating the goal in view; he added a plenary indulgence for the Crusaders and the protec-

www.dacoromanica.ro

tion of the Apostolic See, a promise which produced a profound impression in that age when men feared greatly for the fate of their souls. A monk who had made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Peter the Hermit, was the popular orator who stirred men's feelings; he only traversed part of France, but others doubtless followed his example. Robert, Count of Flanders, an old pilgrim himself, had promised to the Byzantine emperor the help of the trusty French knights who were now fighting in that Turkish war of the empire and elsewhere. He decided to return to the East, and his example won over the Count of Normandy, brother of the King of England, his brother-in-law, Stephen of Blois, and Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine. Raymond, Count of Provence, received somewhat differently the new gospel of the Holy War. Bohemond could not be missing; his father had left his heritage to a legitimate son, and he, the bastard, had to be content with the title of Duke of Tarentum, and the task of hiring mercenaries for his uncle of Sicily. This was an impossible position for a man of his temperament, and he felt convinced that he could carve out for himself a kingdom in the East, at the expense of the emperor, the Turks, or even his comrades, the Crusaders themselves.

A series, therefore, of expeditions of a true military chararacter were organised, which started slowly, through Hungary or by sea, following after the great migrations of beggars and robbers, enthusiasts, peasants and adventurers which were led by popular chiefs, among whom Peter the Hermit necessarily took the first place.

(*b*) *The Crusaders and the Greek Emperor.*—This was not at all what the Greek emperor had wished—these poor peasants burdened with families, these great and troublesome princes, and above all his old Norman enemy. He tried to make the best of a bad situation. With uniform courtesy he gave the Crusaders, without distinction of class or country, a free passage through his country, provisions and guides. The Petcheneges received orders to defend only the goods and persons of the subjects of the empire. The towns coveted by Bohemond were garrisoned. A passage on board

www.dacoromanica.ro

Byzantine vessels was granted to all who applied. Persons who approached too near the fortifications of Constantinople during the long stay of Godfrey under the walls of the capital were forcibly compelled to withdraw. The imperial fleet cruised about against the pirates. The chiefs were required to swear fealty for the conquests which they wished to win in the dominions of the empire, and for these conquests only. Alexios made the greatest efforts to maintain at one and the same time the peace of Christendom and the dignity of the empire with these peremptory guests, no less than with the petty country lords who would not leave his palace, and dared actually to sit on the sacred throne of the *basileis*, on the seat of Constantine the Great, challenging to single combat any who should venture to find their conduct unusual or reprehensible.

(*c*) *Battles of the Crusaders against the Turks.*—After weary months of debates and disputes, he at last got rid of all that disorderly and noisy society. The "Counts" had taken the oath, Bohemond among the first. The first bands of pilgrims had passed into Asia, had captured Xerigordon, and had soon fallen beneath the arrows of the first Turkish army which came up under the orders of an emir. The princes themselves did not put foot on the soil of Asia until the following spring. The emperor followed them there and adopted the only policy possible under the circumstances; he kept a careful eye on the operations of an army which in every way excluded his co-operation, and claimed, should the contingency arise, his rights in the conquests they might have effected.

The superior numbers of the heavy knights armed with lances soon overcame the Turks of Nicea, who lost their town. The Sultan Kilidj-Arslan had himself led the fight. The siege of Nicea would have dragged on had it not been for the action of the Byzantines, which was so effectual that Nicea, which had been lost for three-quarters of a century, was conquered and assigned to them. Having achieved this result, Alexios had nothing more to do with the Crusaders. They went on to attack Cilicia and Syria, and to create the Frankish lordships, which the empire intended to consider as

www.dacoromanica.ro

its vassals. The duty of the empire was however to reap the advantages of the capture of Nicea and of the total defeat of the sultan at Dorylaeon (1097), which soon followed, and to reconquer Asia Minor. With this object he had to husband his forces, even though contrary to the knightly code of honour, the notion of which had never been recognised and adopted in Byzantium, the home of underhand policy and stratagem.

The Crusaders, who recognised for their chief that Count of Blois who is the finest figure among their leaders, reached, after terrible sufferings in the heart of the icy mountains of the Taurus, the plain of Antioch. Toutoush was just dead, and the power in Syria was shared between the emirs of Damascus, Aleppo, and Antioch itself and Jerusalem, who were in the eyes of the Franks true "kings," and the *atâbek* Kerboghâ, who represented at Mossoul in Mesopotamia the authority of the Khalif. The Christian army took the town after prolonged efforts. It was then besieged by the *atâbek*. The Greek envoy was gone, the Sultan of Egypt, whom the Crusaders called Soudan, had professed his wish to remain neutral. The discovery in the church of St. Peter at Antioch of the spear which pierced the side of Christ inspired the besieged with the vigour required to break through the line of the enemy. Bohemond had succeeded in having his possession of Antioch recognised, and his relative, Tancred, was prince of Edessa. The papal legate was dead. The other Crusaders asked for a miracle, the capture of Jerusalem, and it was granted them. After a terrible massacre of the Musulmans, there was a Latin leader, and soon a king, in the precincts of the Holy Sepulchre. It was Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine. The successes against the Egyptian armies secured to some extent the growth of this distant offshoot of French feudalism, organised in every respect on the Western model. Pilgrims kept continuously arriving in disorder, to the great despair of the imperialists, orders of chivalry were organised to form a permanent army of the king of Jerusalem, and the merchants of Pisa wished to monopolise to their profit the commerce of Syria.

www.dacoromanica.ro

(*d*) *Byzantines on the offensive against the Turks.*—During this time Alexios was regaining the coast of Anatolia, and breaking the petty kingdom of Tzachas; some towns of the interior were reunited to the empire. He saw with pleasure the conduct of Raymond of Provence, who thought he was bound to come to an understanding with him in order to organise, with Tripolis as a centre, a new Frankish county, dependent on Cilicia, which for the last ten years Armenian princes, tributaries of the Turks, had come down from their mountains to occupy. On the death of Raymond the oath was exacted from his successor.

Any good understanding with Bohemond, Tancred and their allies, however, was out of the question. They subjugated those Armenians of the Taurus in whom Alexios could only see rebels of his empire. They retook Laodicea from the imperialists. The Pisan and Genoese fleets which came to their help acted with hostility towards the Greeks, allied with Venice, and these had to fight against the vessels of the Crusaders. In the end it was necessary to strike a decisive and rapid blow; the Byzantines entered Laodicea and retook Armenian Cilicia. After this, Bohemond fled to Europe, to denounce to the West the treachery of the *basileus*, while his own lieutenant, Tancred, resumed the campaign in the Taurus.

(*e*) *New Norman War.*—The emperor remained at Thessalonica, where he was fêted by his subjects, for a whole winter, watching the movements of Bohemond. The Norman duke defeated the Byzantine fleet, which ought to have barred his passage. He then arrived at Durazzo and burnt his ships, thus showing his final resolution of never turning back. But the obstinate guerrilla warfare broke down his resolution. He imperturbably concluded a humiliating treaty which made him the liege of the emperor. He might be seen in the tent of the *basileus*, seated on a low chair in the attitude of a conquered foe. He held Cilicia, however, for life, and recognised that his Latin princedom was only the continuation in the Frankish style of the Greek duchy of Antioch, which he retained with the title of *sebastos* (1109). He was counting on recommencing his career in Asia, when death cut him

www.dacoromanica.ro

off in the midst of his preparations in Italy. Tancred, his successor, only accepted the treaty later and with a very bad grace.

(*f*) *Last Campaigns of Alexios in Asia.*—Alexios, who was rendered inactive by gout, then thought he ought to undertake a new campaign in Asia. Notwithstanding a victory obtained over the Sultan Kilidj, who had returned to his dominions, it came to nothing. A chance act of treachery, which got rid of his powerful enemy, allowed the emperor, however, to celebrate a real triumph.

(*g*) *John Comnenus Emperor.*—John, the son and successor of Alexios, began again the gradual conquest of the towns of Asia, turning to profit the discords between the emirs and the new sultan. Castemouni went over to the side of the imperialists. But instead of attempting an assault on Iconium or the fortification of a new frontier, this third Comnenus attacked the Armenians of Cilicia. Having subjugated them, he appeared before Antioch, for which Prince Raymond, the son-in-law of Bohemond, took the feudal oath. He even made an attempt on Aleppo, which belonged to the Turks.

John dreamt of a new dukedom of the South, composed of Antioch, Attalia and Cyprus, which he intended to entrust to his younger brother Manuel. He could not foresee the death which soon overtook him in the course of the new expedition; nor the deaths of his eldest and second sons, nor the absence of a third son, detained at Constantinople, nor the accession of this same Manuel to the imperial throne.

CHAPTER IV

THE EMPEROR MANUEL COMNENUS, A BRILLIANT EASTERN KNIGHT (1143-1180)

(*a*) *Personality of the Emperor Manuel; his Latin Sympathies.*—Manuel I. is an original apparition in the Byzantine Empire. He was the son of an Hungarian princess, and his temperament was absolutely that of a Latin. He felt to the

www.dacoromanica.ro

highest degree the sense of honour, he incurred a hundred dangers in a single campaign in order to fulfil the promises made to his young German wife, Bertha of Sulzbach, whom he often betrayed, or to keep his word to his second wife, also a Latin, Maria, daughter of the Prince of Antioch. He would change his horse several times during a fight, and took his opponents prisoner through seizing them by the hair as he galloped near them. His courser Arrimis—the Arab horses were all the fashion — was known throughout the army. When beaten by the Turks at Myriokephalon, he left the field with thirty arrows fixed in his shield. He was a mighty hunter, and introduced jousts and the ball-game played by the knights in place of the old Eastern pastimes. Nothing was more distasteful to him than to relate his own exploits, and although painters found subjects in his battles he never had a chronicler. He introduced the knightly arms of the Latins in place of the bow and the little bucklers. He had a knowledge of Czech, certainly of Hungarian, and probably some acquaintance with French and Italian. He fought in the Frankish style, sent challenges, and despised nothing more than flight, contrary to all the rules of caution and stratagem laid down by the old books on the art of war. His brother shared the same feelings; instead of wishing to take his place according to the Byzantine fashion, he offered to die for him in the thick of the battle. He delighted in being able to shower gifts on his enemies and do them the honours of Constantinople; he once invited there the Sultan himself, to whom he offered banquets, races, and spectacles of every sort; but for the fear of scandalising the patriarch he would have taken him into St. Sophia. One of his brothers-in-law was Roger of Capua, a Norman who seems, on the news of the death of his father-in-law, John, to have entertained the idea of having himself proclaimed emperor of Constantinople by the Latins in the army. Alexander, Count of Gravina, was several times entrusted with important missions. Maria, daughter of Manuel, was betrothed at first to an Hungarian prince: it was then a question of marrying her to the son of King William of Sicily, and in the end she became the wife of a marquis of

www.dacoromanica.ro

Montferrat. Baldwin, the brother of the Empress Maria, fought at the side of the emperor at Myriokephalon. Manuel could find examples of the new chivalry even in the past of his own family. Prince John, son of Isaac, challenged to single combat a Latin to whom his uncle, the emperor John, ordered him to give up an Arab horse. Since this duel was forbidden him, he preferred to go over to the Turks than to remain amongst his relations under the slur of that insult.

(*b*) *Principles of Manuel's Policy.*—The whole policy of Manuel is instinct with feelings and ideas totally opposed to those which had prevailed in the Byzantine world for six hundred years, and identical with those which formed the essence and aim of life in the feudal countries of the West. Even that fundamental idea of the eternity and of the incomparable superiority of the empire, the mirror of the civilised world, is sometimes shown in a way which testifies to the serious and thorough character of the change thus effected.

Manuel did not wish to reconquer the East, nor did he think it his duty to attempt the task. He only aspired to make his indisputable and natural rights as sovereign recognised everywhere, and by every ruler of the territories into which Asia was parcelled out under the new form of feudal suzerainty. This suzerainty satisfied him and he did not think of overstepping it.

(*c*) *Campaigns in Asia.*—Thus he attacked Antioch immediately after his accession. Prince Raymond went, however, to Constantinople and recognised his superiority; that was all that was required from a man who would have been Duke of Antioch, if he had not had the good fortune to become emperor. The Turks and the emirs of Asia Minor resumed their raids; Manuel exacted a cruel vengeance by putting all the prisoners to death. He attacked Iconium, sending a challenge to the Sultan and bidding him fix the place for the combat, and pursued with jeers the Seldjouk, who fled away vanquished. The wife of the Sultan had already prepared provisions for the reception of the lord of *Roum*; the daughter of Masoud, who had married a fugitive kinsman of

www.dacoromanica.ro

the emperor, appeared on the walls, like a young mistress of a castle, and made excuses to the victors; they contented themselves with ravaging the environs of the Turkish capital, but the emperor forbade them to touch the tomb of the mother of his enemy or even the other gravestones in the Moslem cemetery. Reinforcements, however, came up for the Turks; the imperialists were beaten, but Manuel rejected the peace offered him under such conditions. He only accepted it after a fresh campaign against Iconium; he was satisfied with the restitution of the places recently occupied.

Toros, an Armenian of Tarsus, revolted; he defeated the imperial commander and allied himself with the Turks. The new prince of Antioch attacked the island of Cyprus. This was an insult; Manuel came on the scene and routed Toros; he arrived at Antioch, decided the dispute between Renaud and his patriarch, and forced a Greek patriarch on the prince; he summoned the king of Jerusalem to appear before him. The inhabitants of Antioch long remembered the magnificence of the triumphal entry of that emperor; clad in gold, a crown on his head, ablaze with precious stones, he was preceded by their prince on foot, while the king of the Franks rode in the procession like some ordinary knight. Manuel remained eight days at Antioch, and during his stay no court sat beside his. The Soudan handed over the prisoners and sent him presents. The Turks on the way offered him provisions.

He soon demanded contingents from all these vassals, in order to punish the Turks who had captured Laodicea. The Sultan then gave in; he came to Constantinople and tasted the joys of the Capital. Manuel, to impress him, exhibited all his magnificence, his purple, his gold and precious stones. He dazzled the barbarian and his *megistanoi*. A great reconciliation between the dynasties of Asia Minor was concluded in the imperial metropolis, which was for Manuel the Capital of the world.

When the Soudan proved false, the knightly emperor attacked Egypt with his vassals the Jerosolymitains, and laid siege to Damietta. When the Turks in Asia revolted, he

www.dacoromanica.ro

went against them in person, on the chance of wiping out the shame of the defeat at Myriokephalon. The war could not stop there. He ventured on another campaign, in spite of his age, and proved victorious this time, and once again generously concluded a peace without making any claims.

(*d*) *The Second Crusade.*—It was shortly after these events that the leaders of the second Crusade arrived—Conrad, who called himself emperor, and Louis styled king of France. These were "Christian barbarians," and were received according to their merits. Prosuch, the Turk, accompanied them, protecting the villages of the empire from their ravages. Differences arose thereupon, and blood was spilt. The Turcopouli, according to the imperial orders, marched against Frederick of Hohenstaufen, nephew of the emperor, himself. But the heavy rains brought these surly guests into great danger; Manuel sent them help. He invited Conrad to Constantinople, then, as he proved recalcitrant, he fought him and drove the Germans over the strait. King Louis was received in the palace, and was compelled to be content with a seat inferior to that of the genuinely Roman emperor. Once more there was a distinguished visitor to whom the marvellous city was proudly shown. When Conrad returned, his illusions dissipated, he was accorded a similar reception, and the imperial ships carried him to the Holy Land like an ordinary pilgrim. As Louis took on his return Norman vessels, he was attacked without hesitation by the imperial fleet.

(*e*) *Norman War.*—Roger of Sicily, king by the grace of the pope, had asked in marriage the daughter of John Comnenus for his son, on terms of equality. He was refused. He seized Corfu, appeared before Monembasia, sacked Corinth, Eubœa and Thebes, and came back loaded with plunder and prisoners, especially artisans and women spinners, whom he settled in his country. The Venetians wanted Dalmatia; they had quarrelled with the Greeks and had then come to terms with the emperor John; they were soon to be driven out by Manuel from his dominions, and no longer proved loyal allies of the empire. It was necessary, however, to punish the outrage. Although a Sicilian fleet

www.dacoromanica.ro

made a demonstration before Constantinople, the Byzantine ships commanded by Manuel in person went to recapture Corfu.

(*f*) *Servian Matters.*—The Normans then stirred to revolt the Servian *grand-jupan.* The emperor burnt the Capital of the rebel and forced him to submit, under the promise to send a contingent of his soldiers to the wars in the West as well as in the East. The imperial officers afterwards went to Italy, collected mercenaries, took place after place, left no stone unturned, and ended with a complete defeat after having exhausted and ruined the country of the enemy. The Byzantine fleet remained to the end intact, close to the old and implacable enemy.

(*g*) *War with Hungary.*—The Hungarian kings assumed the title of suzerains of Croatia and Dalmatia, and soon added that of Kings of Rama. The petty Servian princes of the Danube and Bosnia preferred their support to the Byzantine tyranny. A war broke out between Manuel and his kinsmen in Hungary for this Dalmatia and Syrmium; he wished also, in the true spirit of chivalry, to support the cause of a member of the Arpadian dynasty who had taken refuge with him; later he desired to instal the prince Bela, who had married the sister of the empress, and bore the title of despot and the new name of Alexios. Attacks were made against the Hungarians of the king in the neighbourhood of Semlin, Belgrade and Branitchevo, in the Moldavian valleys inhabited by the Roumanians. The Russian princes of Halitch concluded alliances with the emperor, to whom they remained loyal. The old days of the war of the Avars for the possession of Syrmium and Singidumum seemed to have returned. A duchy of Nish and of Branitchevo was created to defend this frontier. As a fact the Hungarians were forced to abandon for the moment their dreams of empire on the Adriatic coast. The emperor answered each Hungarian challenge by a fresh campaign. The war only ended with the reign of Bela, the former despot Alexios, who put an end to the customary inroads into Syrmium and Dalmatia.

www.dacoromanica.ro

(*b*) *Intervention in Italy.*—Manuel also played a certain part in the affairs of Italy, in the great struggle between Pope Alexander III. and the great emperor of the West, Frederick Barbarossa, whom the Byzantines considered a mere barbarian king. He kept up a voluminous correspondence with the chief actors in that gigantic struggle, and sent and received emissaries; at a certain moment he threw a Byzantine garrison into the town of Ancona. Certain political personages of the West, even cardinals, believed, or rather pretended to believe, that the emperor of New Rome was the only true one. In any case he must have been more conciliatory than the other towards the interests of the Holy See, to which he is said to have offered the splendid gift and encouraging pledge of the Union. This intervention, however, and these projects were bound to be short-lived, for a reconciliation was inevitable between the two supreme powers of the Latin world, which, in spite of all the protestations of some isolated or interested individuals, did not like the Greeks, perhaps because it could not accept the Greek point of view or realise simultaneously the conditions of their existence and the permanence of a certain ideal.

CHAPTER V

TAKING OF CONSTANTINOPLE BY THE LATINS — THE NEW EMPIRE OF THE LATINS AT CONSTANTINOPLE (1204-1261).

(*a*) *Ruin of the creation of Manuel Comnenus.*—This magnificent policy did not, however, contain the germs of a future such as Manuel, with his reformer's spirit, would have wished. It was not the outcome of profound changes effected in the Byzantine world; it was rather a richly endowed dynasty, a small body of faithful auxiliaries, and, above all, an extraordinary personality who had created it. Further, Manuel not only did not leave a worthy successor, but it was actually a child who followed him, under the regency of a woman, who, although she had changed her religion and

www.dacoromanica.ro

name, becoming the orthodox empress Xeni, still retained all her unpopularity as a foreigner, a Latin, and a heretic; in addition to which she was exposed to great danger from her youth and marvellous beauty. She took as counsellor Alexius Comnenus, an indolent and superannuated courtier, who was a near relation of her husband, and bore the imposing titles of *Protosebastes* and *Protovestiarius*. Notwithstanding the disparity of age between Xeni and Alexius, and the ugliness and insignificance of the latter's appearance, gossip made him the lover of the empress, and those who were seeking the honour of possessing the favour of the regent and the love of the woman lost no time in spreading this insulting rumour.

(*b*) *Andronicus Comnenus, Conspirator and Usurper.*—The day of pretenders proclaimed by the armies, or of great territorial lords popular in the provinces, who sought a crown, was long since passed. The Comneni had assiduously instilled the dynastic feeling. It was necessary to be of their line to wear the crown, but everyone who was a member of that family had the same rights to the throne. Seniority of birth did not decide the matter, and the recommendations of dying emperors might be put aside in the interests of the State and the dynasty. The emperor John had to overcome intrigues and the attempts at insurrection of a party which wished to give the throne of Alexios I. to his daughter Anne, and to Cæsar Bryennius, the husband of that princess. It was necessary for him almost to share the power with his uncle Isaac, brother of Alexios, and nevertheless that prince, dissatisfied with the rôle which was ascribed to him, went so far as to seek, with his son John, refuge and support among the Turks of Iconium. Manuel himself had taken the place of his eldest brother Isaac, merely because he chanced to be in camp and had the soldiers for him. This second Isaac, brother of Manuel, had to be shut up in a monastery, and there was a change of patriarch. One of the sons of this ambitious prince, Andronicus, united several of the qualities of his line. He was handsome, brave and adventurous, and possessed the gift of ready speech and of winning hearts by amiable and repellent vices, being a squire

www.dacoromanica.ro

of dames and a bloodthirsty foe. Such being his nature he could not accept the strict government which Manuel imposed on all his subjects, on his relations no less than on others. He turned traitor during a campaign against the Hungarians; he roamed in the midst of the Russians of Halitch, and the Saracens of Syria, tasted prison, found means of escaping and regaining favour, and in the end obtained, thanks to Manuel's clemency, the government of Paphlagonia, with the towns of Oinaion, Amisos and Sinope. The incorrigible seducer and incestuous cynic, who only found pleasure in passing or forbidden amours, had become an old man, long retired from politics, whose youthful sins had been condoned, and was a prince enjoying a high reputation for experience and energy. A widower, having lost his last flame, he had one daughter, who lived at Constantinople, and two sons of an age to command—Manuel and John.

Andronicus was kept accurately informed of all that went on at Constantinople during the regency. He was aware of the dissatisfaction of Princess Mary, daughter of Manuel by his first wife; she had first been betrothed to Bela, the Hungarian prince, to whom the dynastic Byzantine name of Alexios had been given (before the birth of the son of the same name as the emperor), in order that he might reign after his father-in-law; married eventually to Renier of Montferrat, who received the title of Cæsar, she still retained that thirst for power which was in the blood of her family. The recluse of Oinaion, who did not believe in the permanence of the reign of Alexios the younger, thought that he had far more right to the crown than this Latin who was intriguing against the Latin queen-regent.

(*c*) *The Populace of Constantinople.*—The malcontents found supporters in the populace of Constantinople, a city so immense, even after the dismemberment of the empire, that travellers estimated the number of its inhabitants at 400,000. The majority of the population consisted of poor artisans who earned small wages, and were disposed to throw the blame on the incapable government; they were quarrelsome and pugna-

www.dacoromanica.ro

cious and regular customers of the wine-taverns. There were, besides, numerous vagabonds and beggars, who were only too glad of the chance of looting during the riots. This undisciplined and discontented mob combined from a common lust for gold and blood. The emperors of the ninth and tenth centuries had tried to introduce discipline and order into it, but after the death of the *Bulgaroktonos* the good old days of doles of money and food, of unedifying if not sanguinary shows in the Circus, were revived for these "loyal citizens" of Constantinople. There were successful revolts under the last princes rallying round the Macedonian dynasty, and it was by a revolt at Constantinople that the imperial career of Alexios Comnenus began. Alexios took steps to prevent the recurrence of these manifestations, and his successor was not troubled with disputes with the lower classes who wanted emperors to suit their taste. The populace endured for a long period without complaint the oppression, tyranny and stern government of Manuel, who only spent money on war and felt no sympathy with anything but his army. The populace did not admire the emperor's feats of arms, but did not dare to protest against his countless campaigns.

(*d*) *Greeks of Constantinople and Italian Merchants.*—The Byzantine people seemed to tolerate even that economic superiority of the Venetians and Pisans which was one of the consequences of the "Latinophrone" policy of the conquering Comnenus. The rich Italian merchants were able to ill-treat the ragged Greeks, insult the imperial officials and the high personages who bore the most pompous titles, without the Constantinopolitans taking upon themselves the task of avenging at once their own poverty and the national honour. When Manuel expelled them for these abuses, and when they replied to the decree of expulsion and confiscation by raids on the islands of Rhodes and Lesbos, and the emperor consented to allow them to return, the inhabitants of the Byzantine Capital appeared to take no further interest in the matter. The Venetians brought back all their insolent and domineering manners, they married the daughters of the empire and encroached beyond the limits of the territory

www.dacoromanica.ro

assigned them. Once more Manuel banished them, and once more the islands in the Mediterranean had to suffer from the Venetian crews. Yet after this rupture and the succeeding *rapprochement* the Constantinopolitans disguised the hatred which was accumulating in their hearts against the stranger who rapidly and insolently attacked their traditional idleness.

(*e*) *Superstitions and Prejudices in Constantinople.*—The moment of the great crisis had come. The populace wished to act and decide, to take or confer the crown, to drive out the hated Latins and rule as in the days of Justinian, Maurice or Phocas, the imperial assassin. There was no longer a ruling class sufficiently numerous, enlightened, patriotic and powerful to prevent the reign of barbarism and the spread of chaos. The Comneni had for more than a century systematically crushed everyone who dared raise his head against them; the result of this policy of persistent energy was that in 1183 nothing remained but princes of the blood and crafty, cowardly officials, ready to cringe before the lord of the moment, the man who dispensed punishments and rewards.

The platonic idealism, which cast a halo round certain personages of the eleventh century, had been long dead. Alexios restored to religious orthodoxy the rights usurped by the philosophers. He persecuted free thought, and yet left the field open to superstition. The childish belief in astrology and the divinations of the East, in which the Turks, their new neighbours in the East, certainly believed, slowly and surely crept into their minds. Men calculated the years each prince would reign; they thought to discover the initials of the name his successor would bear; weird and mysterious rites were performed to predict the future; superstitious forms were observed in all the great ceremonies of the empire. There was a long list of prophets and prophetesses, vagabonds from the East, peasants of Thrace, barbarians, idiots and impostors who, honoured by the title of "fathers," interpreted dreams, discovered the hour of death, pointed out dangers to be avoided, explained comets, put questions to running water, or the falling shades of night,

www.dacoromanica.ro

or to the stars; the "books of Solomon" were in every-one's hands. The petitioner for alms and the shoemaker's apprentice met on this common ground with high officials and the imperial family, who, abandoning all aristocracy of thought, fraternised in these degrading superstitions with the unhealthy populace of the great and decadent city.

(*f*) *Triumph of Andronicus.*—Andronicus, with his hypocrisy and his unctuous language adorned with quotations taken from St. Paul, his favourite author, and with his dogged ambition and his disguised though savage lusts, was the man exactly suited to this society of chaotic morality.

He first of all contrived, by the instrumentality of his sons and his daughter, a plot against the empress. This plot was discovered, and the conspirators were seized, judged and punished; the most guilty naturally escaped, for they had skilfully concealed their hand. A little later, to avoid arrest, the family of the Cæsars sought asylum in St. Sophia, where the people were accustomed to proclaim the emperors. There ensued scenes of pillage and arson. After a regular siege and sanguinary fighting the Cæsars were able to come out, having obtained a guarantee that their lives were safe. The patriarch had supported the two princes, and did not venture again to appear in the palace. A large number of persons were compromised. They must have had reason to rejoice when they received news of the arrival of Andronicus at Chalcedon, opposite the capital, with the soldiers and some ships, whose importance he skilfully exaggerated; the imperialists who wished to bar his road had been routed.

He was readily received at Constantinople; the fleet was given up to him by its commander. The Latins, to whom the empress appealed, did not venture to fight. He was the master of the court and of the imperial town; he put Alexios, the counsellor, out of the way, threw into prison the widow of Manuel, who soon disappeared, being strangled, and ordered his adherents to confer on him first the regency and then the rank of colleague to the young emperor, whom he used to take into his arms and overwhelm with caresses. One day the beautiful boy with the long flaxen locks dis-

www.dacoromanica.ro

appeared in his turn; it was whispered that he had been hanged or suffocated by his old and trusty friend, who broke his ribs with an iron mace to make certain of his death, and that the little body lay at the bottom of the sea. Andronicus finally, to legalise his usurpation, married, old as he was, the young girl who had been betrothed to the unhappy child whom he had just assassinated.

(*g*) *Policy of Assassinations and Judicial Murders.*—The new autocrat did not stop there. He prosecuted with indefatigable ferocity every one who retained any political importance, or might jeopardise that throne, bought by a twofold murder, which he wished to hand down to the son who resembled him, Prince John. The powerful family of the Angeli had at first favoured his elevation; he wished to destroy it. Theodore Angelos, who had occupied Broussa in Asia Minor, was blinded; Isaac, who had taken refuge at Nicea, escaped a similar fate merely by an opportune surrender; the head of his comrade in revolt, Theodore Cantacuzene, was exposed at Constantinople. Even granted that Andronicus reorganised the fiscal administration—his great and only merit—he proved a heaven-sent scourge to the remnant of the Byzantine aristocracy.

The murder of the *archontes* was in those times a pastime in which an emperor who thought himself loved by the people, and had some troops at his disposal, might indulge with impunity. But the Paphlagonians, as soon as their leader entered Constantinople still wearing the woollen cap of the Caucasians, soon to be exchanged for the imperial diadem, had started by robbing and massacring the Latins, and the work which they had begun with the insolence of victorious mercenaries was continued for several days by the mass of the artisans and unemployed, with the cruelty of weak and oppressed men who have found a favourable hour for revenge.

This massacre had the effect of putting the empire outside the pale of the law of nations, so far as the West went; any form of punishment was permissible in the case of a government stained with so hideous a crime.

(*h*) *Norman Attack on Andronicus.*—The task of vengeance

www.dacoromanica.ro

was accepted by that Norman kingdom which, being built up on the ruins of the Greek possessions in Italy, so completely lost after the death of Manuel, felt the duty incumbent on it of Latinising the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea. As in the days of the old Guiscard, recourse was had to the method of presenting to the various populations a claimant, a lawful heir to the empire. The child of Manuel and Xeni could not be so soon forgotten; for many years handsome, fair-haired youths who professed to be the young emperor Alexios himself, miraculously saved from his assassins, came on the scene in Asia, and won many supporters ready to face all sacrifices. One of these pseudo-Alexii presented himself to the king of Sicily, who pretended to believe in his claims and his birth. He was put on board the large Norman fleet which carried to Durazzo an army of Sicilian knights, of provincials and soldiers of fortune. The town was taken. While the ships were doubling the western coast of the Balkan peninsula, steering towards Thessalonica, the other aim of Norman ambitions, the land troops took, to reach the same end, the long road through Macedonia, receiving everywhere as they went the submission of the towns and castles.

(*i*) *Capture of Thessalonica by the Normans.*—David Comnenus, a prince who had escaped death but felt it hanging over him, and served the criminal emperor under the influence of this idea, had the duty assigned him of defending the second city of the empire. He sent false despatches to Constantinople and, devoting his attention to youthful pleasures, allowed the Normans to do what they liked. He did not capitulate, but entrusted the conduct of the war to his subordinates and the motley crowd which inhabited Thessalonica. The knights therefore entered the town and sacked it. After having inflicted every outrage on the inhabitants, dragging the priests by the beard, driving the rich men naked into the streets and squares, and profaning the churches, they divided into three army-corps and took the road to Constantinople. King William could certainly never have put on the throne then the fair-haired boy who pretended to be Alexios II., and the Greek bishops of the two Sicilies had already protested

www.dacoromanica.ro

against the plan which their new sovereign entertained of taking the title and the throne of the emperor, the legitimate ruler. The Norman fleet sailed right into the Hellespont.

(*j*) *Fall and Death of the Emperor Andronicus.*—When the news reached the capital that the Latins were already at Mosynopolis, there was a simultaneous movement to kill the emperor, whose crimes hitherto had all been applauded by the mob. Andronicus wished to arrest Isaac Angelos, but the young man struck down the imperial favourite and high executioner, and then fled for refuge to the church of St. Sophia, which became his headquarters. The patriarch took his part and lowered on to the head of the outlaw the crown which hung above the altar. Andronicus could not find soldiers to defend his throne. He fled towards the mouths of the Danube and was captured; then, with his hands lopped off and his eyes torn out, he was paraded on a mangy camel before the crowd, who inflicted every torture and insult on him, as long as any breath remained in that old and mutilated body. This was the beginning of the reign of Isaac Angelos. The victory won by the general Branas at Mosynopolis over the Normans who were advancing in disorderly bands gave the new emperor the prestige of a saviour of the empire.

(*k*) *Decadence of the Empire under Isaac Angelos.*—This prestige soon disappeared. The provinces would not accept Isaac. Alexios Branas succeeded in bringing under his power all the towns in Europe; so when the emperor at Constantinople had the good fortune to win, he was mean enough to play with the head of his vanquished foe, and to send it as a present to the unhappy widow, rudely awakened from her dream of empire. It was the characteristic act of an Andronicus. Isaac persecuted and blinded relentlessly the princes who supported the dynasty of the Comneni. He only pardoned the Asiatic emperor, who had occupied the town of Philadelphia, a certain Theodore Mangaphas, who was styled "Theodore the Mad." The first emperor of the dynasty of the Angeli paid tribute to the Turks, sending them every year five *centenaries* of silver and beautiful Syrian hangings manufactured at Thebes.

www.dacoromanica.ro

(*l*) *Revolts of the Vlach Shepherds.*—The empire had never been so poor; recourse was soon necessary to the works of art and sacred objects kept in the churches. The Vlachs of Thessaly and the Balkan, from whom excessive tithes had been exacted, rose in revolt under the leadership of the flock-masters Peter and Asan, two brothers, of whom the one had vainly tried to obtain a military fief, and had even been struck by an imperial official. All the mountain district was soon blazing with rebellion and sent out bands of men, armed with arrows, who took the feebly defended towns, plundered the fairs and carried out the cattle, cut all the communications and prevented any regular government, from Serrai and Berrhoë as far as Varna, Philippopolis and Andrinople. Cuman horsemen were during a large portion of the year at the disposal of the shepherd soldiers, who had become the roving and raiding masters of the parts of Bulgaria round Prêslav, as of those round Prespa and Ochrida. The Serbs made capital out of this opportunity and attacked Skopi. The alliance with the king of Hungary, whom Isaac went to meet on the frontier, the despatch of Hungarian contingents by way of Vidin, the conflict of the Russians and Cumans, the repeated expeditions of the Byzantine officers and the emperor himself, were all ineffectual to restore order and break up those bands of bold *guerilleros*. The only general who showed any skill in these compaigns was Constantine Angelos; he, however, rebelled, and was blinded.

(*m*) *Usurpation of Alexios Angelos.*—Alexios, the eldest son of the emperor, considered himself insulted by the succession of his brother to the imperial throne. He had himself proclaimed emperor during an expedition by his friends and the soldiers they had been able to buy over. Isaac was blinded and thrown into prison together with Alexios, his son by his first marriage, for when on the throne he had married a second wife, a sister of the King of Hungary.

The third in the series of criminal emperors did not show himself superior to the ruler he had displaced; he afforded the spectacle of domestic scandals and gloated over the heads

www.dacoromanica.ro

that were sent him to show how well his servants worked for him. These were favourites, universally despised; pretenders who still took refuge in St. Sophia; the artisans of Constantinople looted and burnt the houses of the rich, and dared even to attack the churches and the new Saracen mosque; the prisons were opened by the rebels. The triumph of order was marked by the bloody heads fixed on nails to the walls and by the corpses thrown to the dogs.

The raids of the Vlachs went on as before, and the emperor was, if the truth is told, a prisoner in Constantinople; meanwhile officers, independent equally of the emperor and of each other, commanded as far as Durazzo and Thessalonica; while the representatives of the old families took up their abode in the cities of Achaia and the Peloponnese—Athens, Thebes, Corinth, Neopatrai, Lacedæmon, and the fierce Albanians of the mountains prepared to shake off the Byzantine yoke. This was more than was needed to whet the appetites of the Westerners, whether Venetians, who had numerous insults to avenge and wished to escape constant losses by planting the banner of St. Mark in every place necessary to their Eastern commerce, from Modon to Constantinople and Smyrna; or Normans, always attracted by Greek booty; or French and Lombard adventurers who scented great conquests in the future; or, finally, the court of Rome, which thought the hour had come when the pride which the Greeks had shown should be definitively humbled.

Once, during the expedition which gave Thessalonica to the Normans, the empire had been in danger of collapsing; the happy chance of the victory at Mosynopolis saved it.

(*n*) *Third Crusade.*—A second time the same danger appeared on the arrival of the soldiers of the Third Crusade in the peninsula of the Balkans. Philip, king of France, and Richard, king of England, reached the Holy Land by the sea-route. Although the latter, in consequence of an insult, conquered and captured that ancient rebel against the empire, Isaac, who, occupying the island of Cyprus after the fall of Andronicus, gave himself the title of "Emperor," and although Richard ceded the conquest to the dispossessed

www.dacoromanica.ro

king of Jerusalem, taken by the Saracens, these two streams of Crusaders did not touch the land of Greece. The case was different with the German emperor, Frederick Barbarossa himself, who, crossing Hungary, entered the Balkans. The chief of the Bulgars, who had asked him for the imperial crown of the East, for which he was ambitious like all the successive dynasties for centuries in those parts, met with a refusal. The Greeks, however, believed that he was coming to put an end to their rule, which had long been hostile to everything Latin, knights no less than merchants. At that age of predictions, it was known from the oracles of the soothsayers that the German Cæsar would enter by the gate of Xylokerkon, in order to unite the two "Roman" crowns on his own head. Armed conflicts therefore followed, which always ended by the Greeks flying. Frederick spent the whole of the winter of the year 1189 in close proximity to Constantinople, which trembled before him, while the revolted Vlacho-Bulgars and the Armenians of Philippopolis triumphed at his presence. The Germans finally passed on; they vanquished the Turks of Asia Minor at Philomelion, and captured Iconium, which no one had hitherto been able to take. The "steel-clad giants," who filled with astonishment and admiration the Oriental world of "schismatics and pagans," then entered the defiles of Armenia. A brilliant future opened out to the crusade undertaken under such favourable conditions. But the sudden death of the aged emperor in the icy waters of the rushing Selef cut short these hopes, and also relieved the Greeks of Constantinople of a heavy burden.

(*o*) *Projects of the Emperor Henry VI. against the Greek Empire.*—The Latin peril was destined, however, soon to reappear. Henry VI., the son of Barbarossa, heir to the kingdom of Sicily, calmly and without a trace of that romanticism which characterised the projects of the Norman princes, proposed to unite the whole world under his rule as the only Cæsar. His negotiations with Isaac were merely to pass the time; he awaited the conquest of the East by the destruction of the Greek empire and the crusade; in his double

www.dacoromanica.ro

capacity of a Norman king and Western emperor he forced the unhappy *basileus* to supply the pilgrims with ships and to pay a tribute of sixteen "centenaries" of gold. In order to collect the sum, Alexios III. levied from his subjects, already crushed by taxes, the *alamanikon* or ransom payable to the Germans, and he made up the amount by pillaging the churches and monasteries, and even digging up the tombs of the old emperors. In order to create dynastic rights to the Greek empire in his own family, Henry had arranged a marriage between his brother Philip of Suabia, perhaps his representative designate at Constantinople, and Irene, daughter of Isaac and widow of a member of the Norman dynasty.

The death of Henry was a relief to the empire of the Angeli. But as Alexios had replaced Isaac, there were dangers to fear from the side of Germany, whose new king, Philip, was son-in-law of the dethroned emperor. The young prince Alexios, son of Isaac, had made good his escape, and had found refuge with his sister.

(*p*) *Conflict with Venice.*—In the state of things produced in the West by the death of Henry, the claimant would not easily have found means of recovering his rights, if it had not been for the quarrel which recently had broken out between the reigning emperor and Venice. Once again there were cases of extortion at Constantinople to the prejudice of the citizens of the Republic, and, further, some portion of the compensation to be paid to the ducal government solemnly promised by the late emperor was repudiated. The empire had employed the vessels of Pisa against the Venetian commerce. Alexios III. even kept up pirates at his own expense, who attacked indifferently Turkish or Christian ships. It certainly seemed that Venice was planning a great *coup*. Unexpected events put large land forces at her disposal.

(*q*) *New Crusade.*—Foulques de Neuilly, a priest, went through France preaching the need for a new crusade. A certain number of knights, and even two leaders of French chivalry, Thibaut of Champagne and Baldwin of Flanders, took the cross. The leader of the expedition intended to

www.dacoromanica.ro

restore the kingdom of Jerusalem by attacking the new masters of the Holy Land in Egypt; the centre of their power was to be Thibaut, a bold and very popular young prince. Venice was selected as the port of embarking.

But Thibaut died. His own followers, who composed a large part of the Crusaders, did not wish to apply to the Count of Flanders, who was considered to be in some degree a stranger to France, and offer him the command of the Holy Enterprise. A person interested in the matter proposed Boniface, Marquis of Montferrat; now the marquis had ties with Constantinople, for members of this family, Renier and Conrad, had been allied to the Comneni and had played a prominent part in the Greek empire, of which the former wished to become emperor. Boniface had not taken the Crusader's vow, and was not even closely related to the nobility of France. He had a practical and self-concentrated mind, and knew how to create for himself a dominion worthy of his imperial lineage and personal merits.

Venice, who offered her ships for hire, was at this time the enemy of the Greek empire, and had the greatest interest in destroying it, in order to seize for herself the ports and islands necessary to her commerce. She received further offers from the young prince Alexios, the son of Isaac, which were strongly backed up by the brother-in-law of the claimant, Philip of Suabia. Alexios had offered the submission of the Eastern Church to Innocent III., who was haunted by the vision of the universal dominion of a Gregory VII. Fabulous ideas were formed of the wealth of the Greeks, whose policy had long been to display as much as possible the precious stones, the robes of gold brocade, the jewels and plate of olden days, in order to impress deeply the barbarians. It was foreseen that a crusade which included so few great lords and so many poor adventurers, who had nothing but their armour and their horse, would not be able to pay the cost of the expedition. Alexios then promised 200,000 marks to those who would help to recover his heritage. The inevitable results of these circumstances, so disastrous to the Greek empire, are obvious. There was not

www.dacoromanica.ro

merely the sea-route to the Holy Land, from Venice to Tyre, St. Jean d'Acre or Damietta, there was also another route followed by some detachments of the first Crusaders, who left the sea at Constantinople to take the route by "Civetot" (Kyboton), Nicea, Armenia and Antioch. In this latter case it was necessary to bargain with the Greeks, who possessed all the Eastern part of Asia Minor, and, further, had long been allied with the Turks of Iconium (on this ground they did not venture to turn to account the expedition of Frederick Barbarossa, which shook the decaying Sultanate). It was doubtful whether they could expect such services on the part of Alexios, who was actually at war with the State whose flag floated side by side with the Red Cross on the expeditionary fleet. It might be better for the Crusaders, as they passed, to perform an action both profitable and just, and restore the child Alexios to the throne of his blind father.

(*r*) *Departure of the Crusaders.*—There could not be any doubt that this resolution had been already taken by the chiefs of the expedition when the vessels of the Crusaders left Venice in August 1202. Otherwise the doge, old and blind, would not have himself embarked on one of the galleys, and permission to embark would not have been refused to the papal legate, who was unable either to denounce such an object of the crusade when Jerusalem was under the yoke of the Infidels, or to launch a bolt of excommunication against the princes, who were going to prepare the reunion of the schismatic Church and the Catholic See of Rome. A section of the Crusaders scented some mystery and persistently refused to go to Venice; they embarked at Marseilles. as the French contingent and the previous Crusade had done, and sailed straight for Syria.

Others abandoned the main body on the march, in proportion as the object of the "Holy War" was more clearly defined. The King of Hungary held Zara; the Crusaders did not hesitate to lay siege to that place, which surrendered to the Venetians. It was now, in October, too late to sail towards Eastern waters; a whole winter had to be passed in

www.dacoromanica.ro

that Venetian Dalmatia, and the Crusaders were consequently more closely than ever identified with the policy of the doge. When spring came, a start was made by sea, and then the whole army learnt what it was expected to do at Constantinople. Alexios was on the galleys, and Boniface of Montferrat had immediately adopted the rôle of guardian to the young prince. On the way the pretender showed his hand, as he forced the islanders or the inhabitants of the coast belonging to the empire to recognise his claim. In the month of March the French, the Lombards of the marquis, and the handful of Germans gazed at last on the marvels of Constantinople, which to their eyes seemed to contain the population of the whole world.

(*s*) *The Empire and the Crusaders: Restoration of Isaac Comnenus.*—Alexios III. pretended to know nothing of the matter; he offered as usual to supply provisions to his guests who wore the Red Cross. The doge and Boniface, the true chiefs, did not disguise their mission; they declared Alexios an usurper, and commanded him to give way to the legitimate heir, who was in their camp in imperial array. The emperor made some show of resistance; he had with him English, Danes, and his halberdiers, who were always loyal to the reigning sovereign; he had also had time to collect the troops of the *themes*. Once more he was seen to sally forth with a considerable army, which the few thousands of fine knights and Venetian sailors or Dalmatian contingents did not venture to attack. It appeared, however, that some plot was being hatched in Constantinople, where once more the inhabitants did not wish for an emperor who brought them into danger and misfortune. After the usurpation of Andronicus, all the sovereigns of Byzantium were afraid of their Capital, and passed most of their time in the royal villas in the environs, or in the quiet retreats of the flowery coast. Alexios then disappeared to escape a popular revolt and its accompaniment of blinding, mutilation and insults. The patriarch immediately brought out the blind Isaac from his cell and placed him once more on the throne by the side of the beautiful princess of Hungary, his empress.

www.dacoromanica.ro

(*t*) *Disputes between the Crusaders and the Restored Emperor.*—The Crusaders did not profess complete satisfaction with this change. The sovereign who had given them his oath was the son, not the father. They demanded therefore that their ward should be also proclaimed, and that Isaac should confirm by a golden bull the promises made by his colleague. He had no choice but to accept this heavy necessity and to ransack the churches to find the money which his Western allies expected, while cursing the notorious rapacity of the coarse Latins.

The situation of the two emperors was the more difficult because they could not count on the revenues of the provinces. Not one of the great cities of Europe and Asia had recognised them. Alexios III. still held the country; the governors were all of his creation. The young Alexios actually undertook an expedition to subjugate Thrace, but he came back without having achieved any noteworthy success.

The Crusaders then lost patience; the contract with Venice had been prolonged for a year, but they clearly saw that this term would be insufficient. They were irritated, especially the Venetians, by the attacks which the populace had recently directed against the Latins of Constantinople, who had been compelled to fly. On their side, the Crusaders thought it their duty to attack the mosques of the Infidels, miscreants, and the numerous colony of Saracen merchants and Turcopouli who inhabited Constantinople. The situation was evidently impossible. The chiefs in the Crusaders' camp challenged Isaac, in accordance with all the rules of chivalry, and began hostilities against their "disloyal" ally.

This was the signal for a great popular revolt, and vent was given to the long-standing rancour, fostered by the last outrages and by those demands for money which ruined and stripped the city. The crown was offered to a young man of the people, Nicholas Kanabos. It seems that the emperors, abandoning all hope of being able to support themselves by their own efforts, applied to the Latins, whom they even wished to introduce into their palaces. It was obviously too late. The ruling class, which was tired of the blind man and

www.dacoromanica.ro

the child, and despised and feared the Latins, proclaimed Alexios Ducas, surnamed Mourtzouphlos, because of his thick and frowning eyebrows. He was a prince of the blood, a high dignitary, who held the office of Lord Chamberlain (*protovestiarius*) and was conspicuous for his hatred of the invaders. Ducas acted diplomatically; he seized the person of the young Alexios, whom he put out of the way after the methods of Andronicus; Isaac fell ill, and died; the cause of his death is obscure.

(*u*) *The Capture of Constantinople by the Latins.*—The new emperor did his best to save Constantinople. But in vain; he could not even count on the soldiers and people of that capital. On April 12th, 1204, the Latins held the first city of the world, the only city which might be thought impregnable. The conquerors, with their small numbers, were almost lost in the enormous and panic-stricken crowd. On one side their squadrons of knights advanced cautiously, on the other, by the Golden Gate, Ducas was making his escape, carrying with him the wife of Alexios III. and his daughter, Eudoxia, whom he had married to consolidate his power; at the same time Theodore Ducas marched like an emperor at the head of a band of townsfolk, and at the church of St. Sophia the patriarch presented to the people as a new sovereign the young and brave Theodore Lascaris. A procession was soon organised to receive the Latins and ask their mercy. The victors now wished to have an emperor of their race, and the barons of France and Lombardy had already signed with the doge the treaty of partition of the empire, which gave to each nation a shred of the Byzantine heritage.

(*v*) *Baldwin I. Emperor of Constantinople.*—The Venetian forms of election were employed for the nomination of the emperor; the doge wished to have a feeble prince, without ties or popularity in the East, a prince completely separated from his Western possessions. Baldwin of Flanders then defeated in the election the Marquis Boniface. This latter was, however, destined to have in exchange Asia and Morea. Venice doubtless hoped that he would devote all his attention

www.dacoromanica.ro

to recovering the rich provinces which stretched away on the other side of the strait. Baldwin's action was all it was intended to be, the action, that is, of an exiled and solitary man. Part of the Crusaders, having taken their share of the prey, made their way to Syria, the pilgrims' goal, and other places. Venice did not wish to incur sacrifices; she imposed a Venetian patriarch on the new empire which she subsidised; she did her best to gain a firm footing at Constantinople, where the populace scoffed at the strangers in short tight-fitting dress, who sat on the *icons*, drank, played dice and consumed quantities of new wine, garlic, beef and pork —a meat despised by the Orientals—but soon relapsed into its ancient lethargy. The Venetian families divided among themselves the islands of the Archipelago. Genoa tried to gain a firm footing in Crete. The Pope only thought of the triumph of the cause of the Union, and, with this object, condescended to send legates to the Vlach Ionitsă, who was crowned according to the Latin rites "emperor of the Romans and Bulgars," while the Curia pretended to recognise only a "rex Blacorum et Bulgarorum," a king of the shepherds and the Bulgars. The *ban* of Bosnia, also styled a king, had received the crown under the same conditions. The king of Hungary, whom the Crusaders had attacked contrary to the express command of the Holy See, had become master of the Servian countries, and his representation of the Catholic faith in the East had advanced as far as Nish. The Latin empire, created by the chance of circumstances and without the special blessing of Innocent III., was not the only State authorised to take advantage of the favour of the Sovereign Pontiff, who would have possibly been more flattered by a complete submission coming from a Greek emperor of Byzantium, since the latter might have extended the Roman supremacy over the countries which the Latins never succeeded in ruling.

(*w*) *The New Emperor and his Greeks.*—Baldwin first made a tour of the countries of Europe, as he wished to make his imperial rights recognised everywhere. Alexios III. had fled to Achaia, having first ordered the eyes of his son-in-law,

www.dacoromanica.ro

Alexios Ducas, to be put out; the latter being afterwards captured by the Latins was thrown from the top of a pillar in order to verify an ancient prophecy. But Boniface, who had obtained the great city of Thessalonica with the royal crown, in the place of Asia, forbade his suzerain to continue his journey on his Western dominions, and he did not hesitate to attack the towns of Thrace in order to make an impression on the emperor. He effected a reconciliation with Baldwin, and took possession of Thessalonica as a prince who was on terms of amity with the Greeks; he had married the beautiful widow of Isaac, and instead of exiling, blinding or strangling the son of that emperor, he called attention to the pleasing personality of this new scion of the purple, Manuel.

He had to face two attempts at usurpation. Leo Sguros, master of Nauplia and Argos, had taken Corinth and Thebes, and had even attempted the conquest of Athens; the chiefs of Great-Vlachia negotiated with him. He gave hospitality to Alexios III. and his family, and obtained the hand of princess Eudoxia in marriage. He figured then as a representative of the native race and a viceroy of the legitimate emperor.

(*x*) *Epirus.*—On the other side, a certain Michael Ducas, bastard son of the *Sebastocrator* John Angelos, whom the French called Michalis, had come from Constantinople with Boniface, had seized the coast of the Adriatic and the gorges of Macedonia, and had induced the Albanian clans to recognise him. Being master of the towns of Janina, Arta and the country up to Naupactus, he thus encroached on the rights of the king of Thessalonica, whose object clearly was to build up a State, such as the conquering Normans dreamed of, which should reach to Durazzo.

Boniface first of all dealt with Sguros; he crossed Achaia victoriously, steered clear of ambushes, and crushed all resistance; the French adventurers, who had begun to reduce the castles of the Morea, Geoffroi de Villehardouin the younger, and Guillaume de Champlitte, came and paid him homage. Alexios III., who had come to look for friends at Thessalonica, fell into his power.

www.dacoromanica.ro

(*y*) *Greek Asia.*—The Latin emperor found himself in a far less favourable position. Although he had nothing to fear from the Turks, whose Sultanate was decaying and could no longer risk any conquests, he saw himself shut out of Asia by the calculating policy of the fugitive princes of Constantinople, who had carved out for themselves petty principalities in that land of ancient and flourishing feudalism. David and Alexios Comnenus, grandsons of the emperor Andronicus by their father Manuel, and relations of a princess of Georgia, had settled in the dominions of their grandfather, into which they incorporated Trebizond, capital of an old Byzantine duchy; the elder had taken the title of emperor, and the younger was his active and devoted general. It was absolutely impossible to oust them from their position in those remote regions, close to the barbarians of the Caucasus, their allies. Theodore Lascaris, on his side, having been formally proclaimed emperor at Constantinople, and having married a daughter of Alexios III., was living at Nicea; being unable to induce the Greek Patriarch, who was lying ill at Demotica, to crown him, he awaited his death to create a new head of the Church and receive the diadem from him. The whole country up to the frontiers of the Sultanate willingly submitted to this prince of simple habits, integrity and courage. The Latins held only the sea-coast opposite Constantinople. Mangaphas, Sabbas of Samsoun (Amisos) and the Comneni were beaten, and the two former lost their possessions. The Sultan Azeddin, instigated by the emperor Alexios, was killed near Antioch in a battle against Theodore, who had challenged him to single combat. Alexios III., who had sought asylum in the court of the Sultan himself, was taken prisoner, brought to Nicea, the capital of Theodore, and compelled to enter a monastery.

Baldwin was not strong enough to break down this new Greek power, this Asiatic empire without fixed capital, which had sheltered among the ancient conquests of Godfrey de Bouillon. With the feudal notions which seemed implanted in the Latins, even on this new soil, Baldwin had created imperial fiefs in Asia, and gave Nicea to Count

www.dacoromanica.ro

Louis, and the duchy of Philadelphia to Étienne de Perche. These Westerners would, however, never have been able to subjugate the provinces which had fallen to them, without the intervention of Henry, the brother of the emperor. He had seized Adramyttium, and had been warmly welcomed by the Armenians colonised in those countries, when he was recalled to Europe by the news of a formidable attack of the Vlacho-Bulgars.

(z) *The Emperor of the Balkans : Kaloioannes.*—The Czar of the Bulgars had indeed thrown his troops into Thrace, capturing, sacking and usually abandoning the cities, towns and villages. The Greeks of Thrace, who had at first shown some degree of satisfaction in the terrible punishment dealt out to that Constantinople which had impoverished and tyrannised the provinces for centuries, sympathised with the Vlach, whom they hailed as their true orthodox sovereign. The Frank, whom Baldwin had created Duke of Philippopolis, was shut up in that city ; everywhere else the inhabitants of the fortified towns rose against the Latins and appealed to the followers of the Czar.

The Constantinopolitan emperor and the doge then left the capital, in which they were threatened to be besieged, in order to drive the enemy out of the country and recover what had been lost. They first came across the enemy at Andrinople, which they proposed to invest. But Ionitsă was near at hand ; the Latins proudly offered him battle. They were completely beaten by the masses of barbarians, and the victor left the field, carrying off among his prisoners the emperor Baldwin himself, who languished and eventually died in the prison of Trnovo, the Balkan capital of the new Bulgarian empire. The doge himself soon ended his days at Constantinople.

Boniface was forced then to abandon his campaign against Sguros and to take measures for his own defence. While Henry, regent of the empire, made futile efforts to recover Thrace once for all, and with this object in view appealed to influential Greeks, such as Branas who had married the daughter of the king of France, widow of Andronicus I.,

www.dacoromanica.ro

the king of Thessalonica saw the hordes of Vlachs and Cumans appear before Serres, which was lost. Unhappy Thrace, which had never undergone so many miseries, was ravaged by the Czar in other campaigns. On his return from each campaign, Ionitsă, the *Kaloioannes* of the Greek countess, whom the despoiled people called *Skyloioannes*, "John the Dog" and the "slayer of the Romans," carried off with him thousands of inhabitants, whom he planted in his own country of Bulgaria. Henry, who took the imperial title, after learning of the death of his brother, had only the ephemeral satisfaction of military excursions, which afforded no guarantee for the future. The emperor of Nicea had concluded an alliance with the emperor of Trnovo against the usurpers of the holy city of Constantinople. The Cuman lancemen came up to the walls of the doomed capital. The Italian, whom Theodore had engaged as admiral, entered into the Dardanelles at Abydos. Henry was forced to conclude a treaty which left Nicomedia and some other places to the people of Nicea.

The Latin emperor had married the daughter of the Marquis Boniface, and the latter who had recovered Serres, seized Mosynopolis, famous for the defeat of the Normans. Once more that spot was fatal to the Latins. Boniface allowed himself to be drawn into an ambuscade of the Bulgars and fell; his head was sent to Trnovo. Ionitsă immediately attacked Thessalonica, now the feebly defended heritage of a child; he died from some lung complaint, but the common people believed that the terrible warrior had been pierced by the invisible spear of St. Demetrius, patron of the town (1207). He, too, left a disputed inheritance, and Borilas (Borilă, Brăilă?), his sister's son, fought against John Asan, the only son of the late "emperor." Henry was therefore able to win a victory at Philippopolis over the forces of the new Czar, and the result of the battle was certainly the recovery of Thrace. As the Greeks of Asia observed peace, and the Turks were virtually non-existent, and as Theodore, the first despot of Epirus, never left his mountains, and did not feel disposed to act as the restorer of the empire,

www.dacoromanica.ro

these few years form the most peaceful and happy epoch of the Latin empire. Henry even went to Thessalonica and crushed the resistance of the "Lombards" and of their chief, the Count of Biandrate, whose duty it was to hold the emperor's rein when he rode to the cathedral church of that city. The suzerain of the Frankish barons was seen at Thebes, Athens and Negropont. The tyrant of Epirus made him offers of submission. Unhappily for the Latin cause this emperor, the only true emperor of their race, disappeared too soon for the future of the Franks in the East, in 1216.

(zz) *Successors of Baldwin and Henry, first Latin Emperor of Constantinople.*—Henry was succeeded by his nephew Peter. He disembarked at Durazzo, was defeated and captured by Theodore, the tyrant of Epirus, who never let him free. Peter left two brothers, Robert and Baldwin, the former of whom reigned some years. He was an absolutely harmless prince. Theodore Lascaris, who had long abandoned any systematic opposition to the Latins, on account of the absolute indifference of the European Greeks, had taken for his third wife a daughter of the emperor Peter, and he had betrothed one of his daughters by another wife to the above-mentioned Robert, who died very young before the marriage was celebrated. Baldwin, his successor, the third brother and the last emperor of Latin Constantinople, was a child of tender age. The imperial city would have been certainly abandoned by the Latins, or rather put into the hands of their good friend of Nicea, had not the Pope intervened to entrust the regency to John of Brienne, king of Jerusalem, who, though a septuagenarian, commanded the armies and married a wife. It was this astonishing veteran who prolonged by his regency of eight years (1229-1237) the days of the dying empire.

www.dacoromanica.ro

CHAPTER VI

THE EMPIRE OF NICEA, AND THE GREEK REVENGE.

(*a*) *Apogee of the Power of the Despots of Epirus.*—The despot of Epirus, after the victory won over the emperor Peter, felt himself strong enough to rebuild to his own profit the ancient Greek empire. He took Thessalonica, and had himself crowned emperor by the Archbishop of Bulgaria. He held Mosynopolis, and his troops reached Andrinople and Demotica, driving out, at the same time, Constantinopolitans, Franks and Greeks of Nicea. Although he had given to his brother Manuel a daughter of the new Bulgarian Czar (1218-1241), John Asen, he attacked the latter.

(*b*) *John Asen, Emperor of the Bulgars.*—But this prince was decidedly superior to him. Brought up among the Cumans, he was bold and rapid in his actions. Husband of a Hungarian princess, he had been initiated into the civilisation of the West. It was under his reign that Trnovo, hitherto a mere halting-place for savage warriors and a storehouse for the spoils they had won, became a true Capital, with palaces, churches and monasteries, on the model of Constantinople, Thessalonica or Nicea. He was a "Romaic emperor" of Vlach nationality rather than a chieftain of shepherds and brigands like his predecessors. It was easy for him to remind his inconvenient relation Theodore of the true state of affairs by the victory of Klokotnitza. The despot was taken, and not merely Thrace, recently won, but also Serres, Prilep and the great Thessaliot Vlachia fell into the power of the Bulgars, whose empire extended from the Adriatic to the Black Sea, from Durazzo to Demotica. While the blinded Theodore was languishing in Bulgarian captivity, his brother, Manuel, established himself at Thessalonica and consoled himself for the complete ruin of his States by assuming the purple. When the Czar, in his old age, wedded the beautiful daughter of Theodore, the latter came back to

www.dacoromanica.ro

Thessalonica, crowned his son John, and expelled his brother, who henceforth played a minor part. John dreamt of ceding later his title to the Niceotes.

(*c*) *Emperors of Nicea: John Ducas.*—Theodore Lascaris was succeeded by his son-in-law, John Ducas Batatzes, a striking personality. He did not trouble himself much about the death-agony of the Latins of Constantinople. After seizing the great islands adjoining the Asiatic coast, and fighting for the possession of Lampsacus and the Chersonnese of Gallipoli, he then turned his efforts in another direction. He maintained peaceful relations with John Asen, who betrothed his daughter to Theodore, son of the new emperor of Asia. When the great Czar died, and his son Kaliman (Căliman) disappeared in his turn, having hardly attained his twelfth year (1246), John Ducas resolved to go into Europe to enforce his claims. He took Serres and Thessalonica, where a fallen prince, Demetrius, brother of the despot John, lingered in obscurity. Later, a peace concluded between the emperor and Michael, the head of the Epirote House, decided the marriage of Nicephorus, son of Michael, with a princess of Nicea, and at the same time the cession, as soon as the marriage was celebrated, of Albania and Durazzo. Michael sought to escape this sentence of death, but futilely. His dominions were occupied, and he had to fly to Larissa. He never recovered from his defeats, although he retained to the last the characteristically indomitable spirit of his family.

(*d*) *Campaigns of Theodore, Emperor of Nicea, in Europe.*—After the death of the emperor John (1254), the Czar Michael attempted to seize Thrace and Macedonia from the Asiatic Greeks. His Bulgars received him everywhere with acclamations. But Theodore II., third emperor of Nicea, required only a single campaign to recover these provinces. Recalled by the invasion of the Mongols, he was soon able to come back, for these new conquering pagans, having defeated his neighbours the Turks, had marched to Syria, where they found work for their swords for several years. As the subjects of the Czar had once more flooded

www.dacoromanica.ro

his country during his absence, Theodore was forced to make a new campaign, which was still more easily won, and ended in a most favourable peace. The disturbances which soon broke out in Bulgaria favoured the establishment of the Greek rule in Europe, and Constantine, the Czar of popular origin, who came forward, was greatly honoured by the opportunity of marrying the daughter of the acknowledged emperor of the two sea-coasts.

(*e*) *Michael Paleologus, Emperor of Nicea.* — Michael Comnenus Paleologus, a man of great energy, who had a distinguished military career behind him, and had been forced by the jealousy of the emperor to live in exile among the Turks, ousted John, the infant son of Theodore II., and usurped the throne. His accession was the signal for a revolt in Epirus; he reduced that region, and was fortunate to make prisoner the prince of Achaia, ally of the despot Michael. But the Paleologus had a loftier ambition; he wanted to sit on the throne of Constantinople.

(*f*) *Capture of Constantinople by the Greeks of Nicea.*— The empire of Nicea had recovered all the rights of the old State of the Comneni. The island of Rhodes having become under the rebel Gabalas, who had assumed the imperial title, a new independent Cyprus, had then fallen into the hands of the Genoese; John Ducas reunited it to the empire. Genoa, however, soon showed herself disposed to support the emperors of Asia; she wished thus to take vengeance for the naval defeat inflicted on her by her rival, Venice, in a battle which was to decide the sovereignty of the Eastern waters. The era of the crusades appeared ended, and St. Louis, king of France, had experienced much difficulty in returning from Egypt, where, after landing as a conqueror, he had remained a prisoner. The sultans, or Mameluk Soudans, had undertaken the conquest of Syria, which the Mongol invasion interrupted but did not check. This was the moment to strike a decisive blow which might crush the Latin rule on the Bosphorus. The Genoese, by the treaty of Nymphaion, promised all their help to the emperor Michael, who pledged himself to give the Republic those commercial

www.dacoromanica.ro

privileges which Venice had enjoyed since the foundation of the Latin empire.

In a preliminary campaign the Greeks took the Galata quarter, but consented to an armistice of a year. Venice sent a new warlike *podestà*, who despatched a small punitory expedition from Constantinople. While, however, the city was stripped of defenders, Alexios Strategopoulus, the Cæsar of Nicea, entered by a breach and set fire to the *campi* of the Venetians. The old capital of the East, the sacred New Rome of the emperors and patriarchs, took little notice of these events. For their part, King Baldwin, who had fled, the *podestà*, the handful of knights and sailors of Venice, who immediately knew of the disaster, readily resigned themselves to set out for that West which had been so stern to the Latin cause. Michael Paleologus and the soldiers and savants of his suite were the only persons to feel any considerable emotion at this happy occurrence, which had just "given them Christ." Familiar as they were with Turkish customs, allied with the Latins and accustomed to their way of living, and strangers to racial hatred or religious fanaticism, they could not consider the capture of Constantinople as a mere chance victory. The patriarchal life of the Greek society at Nicea had raised the tone of men's minds; scenes of cruelty and debauch now belonged to the past; a loyal nobility and energetic and pious emperors had governed and guided for half a century a nation of shepherds and unsophisticated peasants. A new philosophy, represented by Nicephorus Blemmydes, and a new literary school had appeared in their poor and obscure surroundings. The loyal George the Acropolite, who did not betray or calumniate the emperor, his pupil, although he had been unjustifiably scourged by him, was one of these representatives. The eyes of these savants must have filled with tears when they saw Constantinople fallen and naked, stripped of the Byzantine monuments and antique statues which had been melted down to supply copper coinage for everyday use.

The ceremony of the Greek and orthodox restoration was not devoid of a simple grandeur. The emperor with his

www.dacoromanica.ro

suite and his army knelt on their knees and listened to the thirteen prayers, composed by the Acropolite, which were recited from the top of a high tower near the Golden Gate. The image of the Virgin opened the military procession; the conqueror, crowned, followed on foot as far as the Monastery of Stoudion. Then he mounted his horse, passed by St. Sophia, and re-entered the palace which his predecessor had quitted sixty-six years before. Some years afterwards in the Cathedral of Justinian, given over to the Eastern rites, he installed the orthodox patriarch on his throne, expressing in fervent language his belief in the permanence of the empire. The Cæsar Alexios subsequently enjoyed a military triumph in which he appeared wearing the imperial crown.

www.dacoromanica.ro

BOOK V

The Expansion of the Turks, and the End of the Restored Greek Empire (1261-1453).

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST WARS OF THE PALEOLOGI.

(*a*) *Boundaries of the Empire of the Paleologi.*—The new Greek empire of Constantinople did not entirely resemble the old empire. Its frontiers were narrower; the whole of the Morea and the adjoining islands belonged to descendants of Latin adventurers who had fought in 1206; Epirus had come into the hands of a line of independent Greek lords; whose inheritance might pass more easily to the Latins of Sicily than to their kinsmen of Constantinople; Venice, the old enemy, and Genoa, the new ally, possessed both on the Continent and among the islands territories of the greatest importance; the Paleologi were therefore reduced to a territory appreciably smaller than that which the ancient emperors had lost, and yet these narrowed frontiers were far less secured against attack.

(*b*) *The Bulgars and their Neighbours on the Danube.*—The power of the new Bulgarian State had disappeared with the great Czar John. The son-in-law of that emperor, Mirche, only ruled over the coast of the Black Sea, which he left to his son John and his son-in-law Eltimir. The western part of the old Bulgaria, with the great port on the Danube, Vidin, fell to another separatist chief, the Russian Sfentislav. The feeble Czar Tochos eked out a miserable existence in the gorgeous palace of Trnovo, which no longer corresponded to his means and his ambition. On the other side of the Danube the Tatars of the rear-guard held the field, under those khans of the Danube, beginning with the

www.dacoromanica.ro

energetic Nogaï, whose undisputed authority extended over all the three Bulgarian countries; he was a veritable pagan emperor for those weak petty sovereigns who were for ever quarrelling with each other. There was always the means of winning by money, presents or flattery the Tatar contingents, mounted on the swift little horses of the Steppe. Their pupils in the art of war with bows and arrows, the Alani, that is to say the Wallachians and Roumanians on the other side of the Danube, good honest people, simple in their requirements, and brave soldiers, were also at the disposition of the Byzantine envoys who eventually came to create difficulties for the Bulgarians, since the latter had once more become troublesome.

The empire was able then to retain Mesembria, Anchialos, Philippopolis, Stenimachos and the castles of the Balkan. A *march* of Andrinople was created to guard this frontier. The Bulgarian princes were delighted to receive a dowry and the imposing title of *despot* on the occasion of their marriage with some noble lady of Byzantium, connected with the family of the true *basileus*. Sfentislav of Vidin married a daughter of Theodore Lascaris. A niece of the emperor was given to Tochos (Tyh) of Trnovo, and the heir to the Bulgarian throne received the name of Michael after his "Roman" grandfather. The son of Mirche also obtained the hand of a princess. In conclusion, a princess of the Royal House, aged six years, was betrothed to the sensual "king" of Servia, who had often changed his wives, and made the Byzantines regard his court as a hideous den of barbarian swineherds. In order to understand the point to which the desperate policy of family alliances was carried by this impotent empire, mention must be made of the gift of an illegitimate daughter of the emperor Michael to the rough Tatar Nogaï, clad in sheepskins and ignorant of the elements of civilisation. Honours and betrothals alternated with skilfully devised intrigues. Tochos was killed by a common shepherd, Brdokba, who had shown his worth in fighting the bands of Tatars who infested the right bank of the Danube. Sfentislav had fallen a victim to the Byzantine princess who was the

www.dacoromanica.ro

wife of Tochos. Brdokba himself, being forced to fly to those terrible neighbours of the North, was assassinated at the end of a barbarian banquet. John Asen, son of Mirche, took refuge on the Byzantine territory, which he never left. The attempt at a Tatar rule failed. A certain Terterij, a semi-Cuman, succeeded better than the rest; he was a good neighbour for the Greeks, being very feeble. It was only under Sfentislav, the son of this new Christian master of Bulgaria, that the old traditional war against Byzantium was resumed, and with a certain energy. Other events, however, complicated the issue, and the Byzantines were not the gainers.

(*c*) *Epirus.*—The despot of Epirus had formerly been ambitious to restore the legitimate empire of Constantinople. With this object he had concluded family alliances with the king of Naples and the prince of Achaia, which might guarantee him tranquillity from the sea side. After the great defeat of the allies, Michael Angelos did not discontinue his relations with the Latins of the Morea and of the West. He was still powerful enough to keep up a traditional rivalry with the people of Nicea, the Νικαεῖς, who had become masters of Constantinople. He obtained some successes in this war, but it could not lead to anything, owing to the enormous distance which separated the two Greek States. Several princes of Epirus were taken, thrown into chains, and kept for a long time in close captivity. Others were attracted, like the Bulgarian dynasts, by the high-sounding titles of despot or *sebastocrator*, and by family alliances. After the death of the despot Nicephorus, son of Michael, his widow, Anne, niece of Michael Paleologus, had the guardianship of his children, and she followed an openly Byzantine policy. She once even offered to her relation, the emperor, in exchange for a new marriage contract, her husband's territories, as forming the "old remnants of the empire." If canonical considerations caused this project to be abandoned, and if, consequently, Anne had to marry her daughter to Philip, a member of the Angevin family of Naples, she kept continual watch to prevent this son-in-law from Latinising Epirus. There were even pitched combats between Anne and Philip, and the

www.dacoromanica.ro

energetic princess knew how to defend herself. In the first years of the fourteenth century, the empress Irene, widow of Michael, resided for a long time at Thessalonica, in order to represent and defend the interests of the empire in those parts.

(*d*) *The Peloponnese.*—The prince of Achaia, in captivity, had promised his conqueror, by a solemn oath, to surrender to him most of his possessions—Monembasia, Misithra and Maina—and had even given him to understand that he would consent to the cession of Nauplia and Argos. The Pope, however, thought it was his duty to relieve him from the oath taken against his will. A great expedition sent to conquer the whole of the Peloponnese achieved some temporary successes; there was little to gain on that side. The hostilities against the lord of Thebes met with no better results. Even if the restored Greek empire was able to seize some of the islands adjacent to Constantinople, there could be no idea of recovering the maritime supremacy which the Italian merchants had won. This supremacy was strengthened by the cession to the Genoese of the Pera quarter, which they occupied, leaving their temporary settlement at Heraclea on the Asiatic shore.

(*e*) *The Latin West and the Paleologi.*—So long as the invading dynasty of the Angevins held Sicily, that is to say, down to the celebrated Sicilian Vespers in 1282, there was always danger menacing on that side, where storms against the empire had so often gathered. The ambition of Charles of Anjou was boundless; in this respect he was not inferior to any of his Norman predecessors. He had given his daughter to the roaming Latin emperor Baldwin, and had thus afforded him a last hope of being restored to his brilliant throne of humility and danger. It was a matter of common knowledge at Constantinople, which was always abreast of events, that the new barbarian enemy of the Italian South was preparing to risk an adventure like that of Robert Guiscard and Bohemond. The Serbs were the allies of Charles and had taken possession of Durazzo, which lay in ruins from an earthquake. Philip, the son-in-law of the despot of Epirus, held Canina and Corfu; after the assassination of the Latin

www.dacoromanica.ro

leader, the city and the island passed into the power of the king of Sicily. The intention of the Latins was to push on to Thessalonica, which was now a frontier town.

There had been an engagement between the Greeks, provided with pieces of paper blessed by the patriarch and anointed with holy oil, and the Sicilian fleet. The emperor had the unexpected good fortune to win a victory. Constantinople, so long unaccustomed to triumphs, saw the ridiculous and pitiable procession of the brave and haughty men, who had been taken prisoners in the fight. No steps were taken to secure a revenge; after the death of Charles and the Sicilian Vespers that seemed impossible.

(*f*) *The Greco-Latin Entente.*—The old religious antagonism no longer existed, on either side, to the former extent. It is true that certain Westerners applied to the Eastern population, together with the designation of "Greeks," a title the Romaics did not choose to recognise, the insulting nickname of "White Agarenes." But at this era the Greeks were so deeply steeped in the Latin spirit, so familiar with the names and things of the West, and so accustomed to visit and entertain the Franks that they retained none of those feelings of aversion or even horror towards them which their predecessors had cherished at certain epochs. There was at Nicea a κοντοσταύλος, or constable, of the guards; the best troops, put under his orders, were formed of foreigners holding another creed. Trials by combat in the French fashion were not unusual.

CHAPTER II

RELATIONS WITH THE WEST

(*a*) *Latin Auxiliaries and Alliances.*—At the time of the capture of Constantinople, a great number of the inhabitants of the environs kept completely in the background, as neutrals. The first fleet of the emperor, who had now returned to his legitimate residence, was made up mostly of

www.dacoromanica.ro

Tzacons, enlisted under the Latin rule, and of Gasmuli, Greco-Frankish half-breeds, a race which had grown up in the last fifty years. In the armies of the Asiatic and European Greeks the Italians fought in the same foreign battalions as the Turcopouli, who had been naturally retained. The empress of John Ducas was the princess Anne, sister of Manfred, the heir of the Hohenstaufens. Two daughters of Theodore Lascaris married Latins; thus a daughter of the Nicean empress was able to be queen of Catholic Hungary. Michael Paleologus asked the hand of a princess of that country for one of his sons. The second wife of his successor, the emperor Andronicus, was Irene, niece of a Spanish king. The son of this Andronicus, Michael, placed the Latin emperor Baldwin's own daughter, the descendant by her mother of Charles of Anjou, at his side on the throne of the orthodox *basileis*. Another marriage was concluded with the Catholic daughter of a prince of Armenia, and the king of this poor and threatened country was often seen in the streets of Constantinople, a favourite with the Greeks no less than with the Latins, whose quarrels, Venetian against Genoese, he used to calm.

(*b*) *Negotiations for the Union of the Two Churches.*—These Greeks of a new era could no longer hold it a sacrilege to treat with Rome for the union of the two Churches and the consolidation of the empire. An emperor of Nicea, John Ducas, had already attempted this great task of reconciliation. Michael Paleologus devoted all his dogged energy, all the force of his strong passions, to accomplish that end. He recognised the rights of the Holy See to the primacy, and emphatically proclaimed the community of faith established between the young West and the poor fallen East. The opponents of the union were persecuted without respect of age, position or deserts. The best known among the *despotai* of Byzantium, influential clergy, men of such mark as Holobolos the rhetorician, who was the leader of the literary movement of the epoch, had to suffer for their opposition to the new system in religious matters. There were sentences of exile and imprisonment; there were hideous scenes when

www.dacoromanica.ro

eyes were torn out, and miserable wretches crowned with offal were paraded before the hooting mob. But when the pope further insisted on the adoption of the Roman Creed, the union was broken off.

After the death of Michael—who, however, never returned to the old uncompromising orthodoxy—there followed a veritable chaos of discussions, synods and intrigues. Patriarchs rapidly succeeded each other, each of them retaining to the end a certain number of partisans; shut up in their European or Asiatic monasteries, brooding over the memory of their wrongs, they were inevitably the disseminators of discontent, the agents of revolt. The emperor Michael, and afterwards his son Andronicus, vainly summoned synods to restore order in religious matters, which were so entangled that only a great statesman or a saint could put them straight. Owing to the incessant appeals to canonical usage, the authority of the patriarchs soon rose to so high a point, that it sometimes overtopped the imperial throne, which several reasons contributed to degrade. The head of the Church could, if he wished, withhold from the head of the State the communion, the consecrated bread; he could go on strike, disappearing into a convent, where they did not fail to go and look for him; he was the acknowledged patron and protector of the poor, the standing advocate of the people, and he had his days of reception when he spoke without any reserve in exercise of his high ministry. As a pendant to this picture, the very pious Andronicus might be seen crossing the streets of the capital at the head of a procession of slowly moving knights and footmen, wrapped up in their religious ideas, on his way to hunt out in his retreat some recalcitrant patriarch.

www.dacoromanica.ro

CHAPTER III

NEW CUSTOMS IN RECONQUERED BYZANTIUM

(*a*) *Class Decadence in the Constantinople of the Paleologi.*—These incidents of the religious life hardly affected the people, which had now fallen into the most complete lethargy. Even the dominant class, the *συγκλητικοί*, the members of the nominal Senate, was no longer capable of resistance and revolts. When the emperor was bad or indolent, prayers were offered to heaven, but no effort was made to escape the evil.

(*b*) *Disappearance of the Idea of Universal Empire.*—The ancient idea of the grandeur of the empire—boundless, eternal, immovable—had disappeared in the exile. At most a chronicler may now and again make a passing allusion to it. When the attack on Constantinople was only being planned, the Niceans uncovered the bones of Basil Bulgaroktonos, which they reverently collected as relics. This discovery, which recalled a splendid past of victorious wars and triumphant pride, failed to infuse into the soft inhabitants of the New Byzantium a true feeling of patriotism. The State founded by those honest princes of Nicea, who had made money in their own Asiatic homes by selling cattle and eggs, is for the future the Rhomais, the country of the Rhomaioi, one of those formations of a defined ethnographic character which make up the Christian and civilised world. Rhomais is no longer the empire; it lives in the present and is adapted to its requirements; it has forgotten the past, and does not dare to look toward a distant future. Rhomais has not to ask explanations from neighbours, who are no longer treated as usurpers; it resigns itself to see the Genoese masters at Pera and to recognise them as rulers of the Black Sea and of the straits as far as their splendid colony of Caffa in the Tatar Crimea; it calmly looks on at wars between Venetians and Genoese, which more than once

www.dacoromanica.ro

made the streets of the imperial capital run red with blood; it no longer feels the necessity of having a fleet, for the sailors of the earlier years are dispersed for want of pay, nor of keeping up an army, for neither the *ῥόγαι* nor the *πρόνοιαι*, the pensions of the soldier-peasants, are forthcoming. Nothing more can excite it, trouble it or renew it; it is content merely to exist. The interests of the dynasty, the traditions of an ancient civilisation, the memory of a marvellous diplomacy, and, above all, the lack of powerful enemies are the only elements which still keep it alive.

Between the empire of Constantinople and that empire of Trebizond which the Byzantine writers scornfully called the "principality of the Lazes," there were only the material differences of extent and wealth. In the ancient city of Constantine, as in that barbarian nest between the mountains and the Black Sea, there were only to be found a gorgeous sovereign with decayed prestige but splendid trappings, monks who were for ever quarrelling, and foreigners who developed the wealth of the State and supplied it, so far as they chose, with the means of defending itself.

(*c*) *Oriental Character of the New Empire.*—The new rulers of Constantinople were true Asiatics, and they long retained that character. The high offices and the customs had equally an Oriental colouring. The emperor returned from Nicea has a chief falconer, a *logothetes* of the flocks, a *mystikos*, a *tatas*. He dispenses charity like the Khalifs; he holds State councils which resemble the patriarchal debates of the "Sublime Portes" of the desert. Many of the customs exactly resemble those of the Turks of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, without it being possible to say on which side the innovation was. Constantinople did not make these nobles of the new empire forgetful of their native countries, and in the early days they did not fail to send their dead to Nicea, where they were reverently laid in the family sepulchres.

www.dacoromanica.ro

CHAPTER IV

FIRST CONFLICTS WITH THE TURKS.

(*a*) *Renewed Turkish Attacks.*—The new restored Greeks of Constantinople could not then ignore the Asia to which they owed everything. The castles on the frontier were strongly garrisoned for a decade; the peasants of the military villages on the Turkish border received their old subsidies and enjoyed, as before, a complete exemption from taxation. The Turks of Asia Minor, still a prey to the panic which the unexpected invasion of the great Tatar masses of Houlagou had inspired, kept among the mountains, to which they had taken their flocks and their goods, ever on the watch and ready to defend their independence to the end. But, after the Mongol rush died away, marauding bands reappeared, flooding the rich valleys inhabited by the Greeks. They only found a careless guard maintained; the great requirements of the New Empire had resulted in the suppression of the useful privileges and in the removal to Europe of the best Asiatic troops. Certain subjects of the emperor even went over to the side of the Infidels and acted as bandits in their employ. At the same time the Sultan Azeddin, who had fled to the imperial court, made a secret alliance with the Czar of Trnovo and provoked a Bulgarian invasion which extended as far as Ænos. Although he had pretended to profess Christianity, he relapsed into the faith of his ancestors so soon as he put foot in Asia.

In the course of a few years the Turks succeeded in driving the empire back behind the river Sangaris. They had several leaders who were by no means brilliant. Plunged in a profound barbarism, the emirs of Aidin, Menteshe, Saroukhan, Karasi, Caraman and the foremost *begs* of the Ottoman House had no resemblance to the brilliant sultans of the past, proud of their lineage, their wealth and a certain civilisation which brought them nearer to the "Romans," for whose grand and luxurious life, filled with the memories of the past, they felt great admiration.

www.dacoromanica.ro

(*b*) *The Byzantine Defence.*—The first restored Nicean emperor at Constantinople did not, however, resign himself to the complete desolation of those provinces of Asia, where he was born and where he had spent his youth. He sent across the strait plenipotentiaries, and even members of the imperial family, who were more or less capable of performing their duties. He did not neglect to come personally to the ravaged territory, and repeated his visit several times. Frontier fortresses were hastily rebuilt, and an attempt was made to form a large fortified camp at Tralles, with the intention of conducting a defensive campaign. But a few months hardly elapsed before this great military work of the Paleologi fell into the power of the Turks. Jealousy between the governors and revolts hastened the work of disintegration. The Cretan troops, who for some time had carried on a guerrilla warfare against the pillagers, were exhausted by dissensions and disappeared, while a new wave of Turks swept away all the feeble dykes which the emperor had raised to stay the menacing flood. When the young emperor Michael, son of Andronicus, second emperor of the new dynasty, was rejected and besieged in Magnesia, there was a general rout among the inhabitants, who sought refuge in the neighbouring islands or on the continent of Europe.

(*c*) *Friendly Turks at Constantinople.*—At the time of the great Mongol invasion which drove the Turkish warriors into the mountains and compelled their chiefs to ask for the "*oulama,*" or permission, of the Great Khan, King of Kings, whenever they wished to act in an important matter, there were still to be seen in the Greek villages of Asia and Europe fugitive chiefs and even sultans, who were content to have found a refuge. Many of them professed their sympathies for the empire and for the Christian faith; one of the sons of the Sultan Azeddin joined to his Moslem name of Melek (king) the glorious name of the founder of New Rome, and styled himself Melek Constantine, as formerly in Old Rome the Germanic king Odoacer assumed the *cognomen* of Flavius. A Tzasimpaxis and a Kouximpaxis betrayed a Turkish origin by their

www.dacoromanica.ro

foreign names, but they proved loyal servants to the Byzantine emperor. The institution of the Turcopouli, that "Roman" prototype of the janissaries had not disappeared. In the gravest crises produced by the Turks there was always some chief of their race to offer his services to a Christian potentate in difficulties.

(*d*) *New Characteristics of the Turkish Chiefs.*—At Constantinople, nevertheless, there were no longer the means, as formerly, of winning over and employing the most redoubtable brigand-chiefs. Those personages seemed to have lost the taste for pensions and presents which had always distinguished the barbarians who had relations with the Rome of the East or of the West. They were, besides, as the chronicler Pachymeres, the confused historian of that chaotic age, sadly relates, far too numerous. It would have required a much richer treasury than that of Michael or Andronicus Paleologus to satisfy their demands. It must further be remarked that the soldiers, on their side, no longer wished to listen to reason and lay down their arms at the first summons of a commander bought over by the fair gold pieces of the emperor. They at once deserted the chief who would not fight any more and rallied round a more determined warrior.

(*e*) *New Auxiliaries for the Empire against the Turks; Alani of the Danube or Vlachs.*—As the soldier population which had defended the frontier in the first days had left its posts, in consequence of the extortions of the officers of the empire, which came on the top of the crushing weight of taxation, recourse was inevitably had to foreigners to secure to Rhomais the few fortified towns and castles which it still held.

There could be no thought of an alliance with the Bulgars. These neighbours on the North had first of all submitted to the Tatar son-in-law of Terteres, Chuki; under the brother-in-law and assassin of Chuki, the new Czar Sfentislav, they once more invaded Thrace, and at a given moment they were able to retake the ports of Anchialos and Mesembria. There were, however, on the nearer side of

www.dacoromanica.ro

these degenerate but still active Bulgars, the Tatars of the Danube, the soldiers of Nogai. The Byzantines did not hesitate to flatter, to load with presents, or even to offer marriage to those hideous chiefs clad in the skins of wild beasts, to those yellow monsters whom the people called *cynocephaloi*. The Tatars did not care to put themselves out for so little. They hired, however, their Christian subjects, the Romans or Wallachians, whom the Byzantine chronicle of that era, which had a weakness for archaisms, calls Alani. Some thousands of peasants responded, bringing their families in great wagons drawn by oxen; they fought valiantly on foot, in small bodies, on the soil of Asia, and more than once saved the Greek detachments. In the end, badly paid and threatened with the loss of the horses entrusted to them, they revolted, and after a chequered history perished in the great disturbances which marked the beginning of the reign of the emperor Andronicus.

(*f*) *The Catalans: Roger de Flor and Berenger.*—Since the Alani proved inadequate, Cretans and adventurers of any and every nationality were transported into Asia. An unhappy inspiration suggested recourse to the help of the Catalans and Almogabares, those uncompromising pirates, who had continually swarmed for the last ten years or more; they were led by chiefs who, without perhaps their chivalrous loyalty, resembled the old Norman Vikings of that Sicily, of which the Vespers of 1282 had robbed the French dynasty. The emperor most probably only wished to have a daring chief, familiar with the profession of a *guerrillero* and a pirate, in order to fight the Turks with their own weapons. But he had a whole army of some thousands of veterans who were resolved never to return to the West so long as in those Eastern lands there was pay to earn or a town to sack. The old Norman dukes seemed to have risen from the dead; turn by turn there appeared Ferran Jayme, Roger de Flor—who married a Byzantine princess, bore the sounding titles of duke, grand-duke, and Cæsar, and was murdered in the very room of the empress after being for years the scourge of Asia Minor and Thrace—then Berenger, Romfort, and Guy,

www.dacoromanica.ro

fierce veterans, reckless of honour or scruples, and as proud as they were rapacious. They retained, of course, none of the characteristics of the Crusaders, neither their horror of the Infidel nor their mystic adoration of the Cross. If Oursel, in the age of the Comneni, negotiated with the Turkish chiefs against whom he was most often fighting, he always entertained a feeling of contempt and distrust of the unbelieving Saracen, while the Catalans and the Almogabares made no difference between the Greek and the barbarian Turk, and employed them turn by turn. When summoned to the help of a threatened town, they took up their abode in it, plundered it, and went off with the greatest indifference, leaving the remnants to the followers of the sultans who never failed to come up. Cyzicus long preserved the memory of the allies of Sicily; it never rose from its ruins.

Having thus accomplished their mission in Asia, they rushed upon unhappy Thrace, which must have regretted the days of the Latin empire. Their only wish was to live from hand to mouth, working for their meat and drink with their swords; the chiefs wished also for rich pensions and the impossible payment of accumulated debts. Gallipoli, the naval arsenal of the empire, was for years Catalan. The Bulgars on the other side took what suited them. The Turks could not be absent from the feast, and the Catalans did not scruple to invite them to it. They already owned a fleet, which had crossed the Archipelago and laid waste the islands, and they had taken firm footing in Chios; Heraclea itself, in front of Constantinople, belonged to them, after the inhabitants, having burnt their houses, had taken refuge in Selymbria; they might be seen prowling round the imperial city, which feared at any given moment a new siege by a combination of all her enemies.

The fate of the Paleologi, who were now restored at Constantinople, would have been still more sad, had not their feeble State, torn and impoverished by the complete interruption of all commercial relations with Asia, stripped of soldiers and distracted from the duties of defence by interminable theological bickerings which humiliated the sacred dignity of

www.dacoromanica.ro

the emperor before the monkish piety of a peevish patriarch, found a twofold support in the Tatars and the Genoese.

(*g*) *Relations of the Empire with the Tatars.*—At the first inrush of the Mongols, the emperor had recourse to the unfailing method of winning over his enemies, to the gift of a Byzantine princess. She was his illegitimate daughter Mary, whom a Christian prince would have hesitated to marry. Mary, sister of Andronicus, became then "δεσποῖνα τῶν Μουγουλίων," one of the many wives of the Great Mogul. In order to win over the Tatars, the dying empire displayed all its pomp before the ambassadors of the khans. More than once the intervention of the great potentate, who was supposed to be favourable to the Christians, checked the Turkish invasion. The great emirs, the Caraman, the master of Lydia, Oumour, and Othman, who was encamped on the outskirts of Nicea and in the valley of the Sangaris, revenged themselves, at each weakening of the Tatar power, by devastating a new Rhomaic district which their soldiers immediately colonised with their tents and their flocks. The Moguls, by the middle of the fourteenth century, had lost much of their power, and the hour of the brilliant revenge of the bloody Timour had not yet come. Othman was even able to seize the lost fortresses which defended Nicea. He already held Broussa and many other places, without having yet organised any plan, being ready to recover his mountain citadel of the Olympos in the face of a more powerful enemy.

(*h*) *Negotiations between Rome, Genoa, and the Greek Empire.*—The Union proclaimed at the Council of Lyons had not advanced the interests of Byzantium; nothing was left from it but a religious controversy which it was henceforward impossible to stamp out or even to lull, an endless discussion between the successively anathematised partisans of the different patriarchs, on the subject of the relations with the Holy See. The Papacy was slowly approaching the supreme humiliations which awaited it under the pontificate of Boniface VIII.; it had no means of helping, either by itself or by the combined action of Christendom

www.dacoromanica.ro

under its orders, those converts in Constantinople who were clearly destined soon to return to their ancient ways.

Genoa had obtained by the re-establishment of the Greek empire in Europe all the requisite conditions for carving out for herself in the course of a few years a vast colonial empire. She long hesitated to undertake this task, which was possibly beyond her forces, since a similar work had been beyond the power of Venice. She left to private individuals, her citizens, the Zaccaria and others, the task of gaining a firm footing at Smyrna, Phocea, and in the island of Tenedos. Although she was also at war with Sicily, she did not intervene in the Catalan crisis; she left the Rogers and the Romforts to plunder as they liked, and even allowed them, after their ill success in Thrace, to form themselves into a company which definitively took possession of certain places of Hellas (Athens and Thebes). In order to have Genoese vessels the emperor was obliged to come to terms with the private captains. It is true that even on these conditions he could not obtain the help of the Venetians in preventing the crossing of the Turks from Asia into Europe.

When, under these circumstances of complete humiliation, the reign of Andronicus, the second Paleologus, ended in 1328, the empire had very little to lose, and there was no means of reviving and restoring it. This is evident from the decisive fact that the old dogged ambition, the old ideal which lived even in the darkest hours, had disappeared. The historian of the time, Pachymeres, a desultory and dull Froissart, who is very interested in the questions of legitimacy broached by the patriarchs, says no more about the universal empire confined within its temporary limits by the will of God. He ventures to pronounce for the first time this name of Rhomais, the little Greek country, which is confession in itself.

This Rhomais itself was fated soon to perish.

www.dacoromanica.ro

CHAPTER V

DYNASTIC DISPUTES IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

(*a*) *Bulgarian Dynasts of the Fourteenth Century.*—In the fourteenth century two factors once more largely contributed to the weakening of the poor fallen State.

The Bulgars proved at this epoch accommodating neighbours. Marriages between the courts of Constantinople and of Trnovo were ordinary events. John V. Paleologus betrothed his heir Andronicus to a Bulgarian princess. The dynastic disturbances, however, continued in that country. George Terteres died after having won from the Greeks the important place of Philippopolis; his uncle and legitimate successor Voïslav consented to be merely Byzantine "despot" for his life; he often figures in the disputes at Constantinople. Michael, the new Czar, who had first of all governed Vidin and the western district adjoining the Serbs, had long borne that title of dèspot which the degenerate empire so lavishly bestowed upon foreigners. He died after losing, in 1330, the great battle of Velboujd against the Serbs. The Greeks immediately seized the Bulgarian ports of the Black Sea, which they retained until Alexander, nephew and successor to Michael, was firmly established on the throne. This young prince, whose reign was soon fated to decay, won the battle of Rhossokastron, so discreditable to the Byzantines, and succeeded in recovering the littoral. Peace was purchased at this price, but the crafty diplomats at Constantinople kept by them a son of Michael, Shishman, whom they proposed to play off against their Northern neighbour, if the latter made any show of raising his standard against them.

The Bulgarian empire soon lost its ancient unity. A certain Balica established himself at Cavarna, one of his brothers, Dobrotitsch, became a formidable power in the regions of the Euxine, and when his stronghold of Midia was captured by the Greek emperor he made Varna the seat

www.dacoromanica.ro

of his rule. Momchilo, a brigand chief, entered the service of Byzantium and became first despot, then *Sebastocrator*, but finally fell a victim to the just vengeance provoked by his outrageous pillaging. The Czar Alexander was unable to restrain and master such powerful rebels.

If during the civil wars of the Paleologi there was the constant fear of seeing Michael enter into the sacred city, if, a little later, Alexander himself was considered by a number of subjects of the empire more endurable as a foreign chief than the Latins of Venice or of Genoa, the most formidable foe was no longer in that quarter.

(*b*) *Servian Expansion: Doushan.*—Much more important and really dangerous was the new vigour acquired by the Serbs. The marriage of the old Kral Stephen with princess Simonide, daughter of Andronicus II., was an event fraught with great consequences for their future. Disgusted with the Byzantine policy, which wounded her interests as mother and her pride as empress, Irene, mother of the queen of Servia, took refuge at Thessalonica, which she administered as she chose. She favoured to the best of her power the expansion of Servia, hoping, it was rumoured, to gain for one of her sons the inheritance of Stephen, who had not had any children by his grand Byzantine marriage. The Kral adopted the habit of wearing a crown like that of the emperors, instead of the old princely *kalyptra* which had modestly adorned the brow of his predecessors. Stephen Ourosh, successor of Stephen Miloutine, was the husband of another Byzantine princess, the daughter of John, son himself of Constantine Porphyrogenitus. He carried on the work of Servian unification and set siege to Ochrida, and thus showed the intention which the Serbs certainly had of seizing Macedonia, now divided between the imperial officials and many rebels, and of thus marching by way of Thessalonica to the free sea of the Archipelago. His power excited the envy of his Bulgarian neighbour, who was completely beaten and was killed a few days after the battle of Velboujd (1330). His son, a third Stephen, had not the patience to await his father's death to reign. This Stephen, surnamed Doushan, had married

www.dacoromanica.ro

the sister of the Bulgarian Czar, Helena; he maintained relations with the West, which sent him German mercenaries for his wars of conquest; he was the good friend of the Venetians, and did not hesitate to enter into negotiations with the Holy See. He cleverly turned to advantage the Byzantine feuds and gradually extended his rule toward the South. The castles of Macedonia, Edessa, Berrhoë, Melenik, after suffering many vicissitudes, many raids and massacres, remained in his power, but he was not powerful enough to be able to take the great city of Thessalonica. Since he had in his power many districts inhabited by the Greeks, he ventured to take the title of "emperor of the Serbs and Romans," and never again abandoned it. He could not indeed act otherwise if he wished to be on the same plane as the Bulgarian *dynast*, and if he laid stress on being definitively recognised by his Greek subjects in the newly acquired countries. His ambition naturally did not extend beyond the western half of the empire, and he could not even dream of a solemn entry into Constantinople.

(*c*) *Other Western Neighbours.*—Even in these countries there were still enemies for him to remove. The Albanians of the mountains had broken all the bonds of submission, and for the future only wished to obey those clan chieftains whom the Byzantine writers termed *phylarchs*. The despot of Arta, John Ducas, had just died, but he had left a widow, Anne, and a successor, the infant Nicephorus, who married a daughter of one of the rival emperors of Constantinople. This marriage dashed the hopes of the princes of Tarentum, who had for a long time sheltered the young Ducas and had sent him back eventually to his own country with some Italian troops. Nicephorus, adorned with the title of *panhypersebastes*, lived for the future in the court of his father-in-law while his territories were administered by imperial officials.

Thessaly had been divided after the death of its governor, the despot Gabriel Stephen, between the "chief of Wallachia," ἄρχων τῆς Βλαχίας and the chiefs of the Albanian bands. The emperor John Cantacuzene tried to re-

www.dacoromanica.ro

take it by sending there his kinsman, John Angelos, whose rule was short-lived. The country remained for a long time in anarchy.

More to the south, finally ,on the side of Patras, the Catalan Company held its own in Attica and Bœotia, and there was no one strong enough to dislodge it.

We must not forget the principality of Achaia, now rapidly decaying. Still further, Cantacuzene sent to Morea his son Manuel, a young man as persistent as he was brave, who found the means of subduing the peninsula; he retained it even after the defeat of his father and the downfall of his whole family.

The emperors of Constantinople had been forced to abandon all plans of recovering their lost possessions even in the narrow limits of the Balkan peninsula. A new cause of weakness and of humiliation was added to the others—the rivalship for the crown.

(*d*) *Disputes about the Crown.*—The first Paleologus, in spite of his religious tendencies, had not been faced by any rival or menaced by any conspiracy. The lot of his successor, Andronicus II., was less happy. He was not one of the Nicean princes of patriarchal habits; he married in turn two Latin princesses, Anne of Hungary, and Irene of Montferrat; his son Michael took to wife a daughter of the king of Armenia. Andronicus, son of Michael, chose a German bride, and a daughter of the Duke of Brunswick was destined to share with him the throne of the orthodox emperors of Byzantium the Eternal. Another son of Andronicus II., Theodore, went to Italy to claim the inheritance of his mother; he lived as a Catholic. Even if the emperor himself held to the old Greek usages, his sons had rather been educated according to the Latin ideal of the noble knight, which seemed to have revived in the fourteenth century.

They could not understand like the people of former times the reverence due to the forms of the Old Empire; the rules for the succession to the throne, observed since the age of the Comneni, no longer appealed to them. Like the princes of the West, from the oldest to the youngest member of the

www.dacoromanica.ro

family, they wished first and foremost to create a dominion transmissible to their heirs. Surrounded by young men, devoted to adventure, lovers of the joust and the tourney, most sensitive on the point of honour, they would not yield an inch when it was a question of their ambitious schemes.

Andronicus II. had grown old in the scruples of conscience and religious observances. He would have wished to leave the power to his second son, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and to the son of Constantine, Michael, to the prejudice of that other grandson who bore his name, the young Andronicus, son of Michael, that ambitious imperial heir, who died at the age of forty-three years. This latter prince roused his grandfather's indignation by his frivolous manners, by his indifference to the affairs of State and by a scandalous prodigality which had rendered him the debtor of the Latins of Pera. But the young Andronicus did not wish to resign. Strong in his right, counselled and sustained by the first families of the empire, especially by the bold Syrgiannes and by John Cantacuzene, the first man of his time at Byzantium, a relation of the Paleologi, he revolted.

(*e*) *War between the Two Andronici.*—The war between the two Andronici, between the "old emperor" and the "young emperor" lasted seven years; it completely devastated all the remains of the empire. The Bulgars and the Serbs joined in it; the Slavonic Czar of the Euxine supported Andronicus II., and the Slavonic Czar of the Adriatic granted his favour to the rival who wished at once to become Andronicus III. These long hostilities had, however, no resemblance to the old struggles for the crown, fought by regular armies, headed by the princes who disputed the throne. Andronicus took care not to abandon his Capital, where he peacefully passed the life of a pious old man in constant fear of death; he had not even generals capable of serving him well. His grandson, in spite of a weakness induced probably by his excesses, rode without fatigue from one town to another, having in his suite some hundreds of good horsemen and a changing crowd of adventurers. A treaty, of short duration, was intended to assure him the possession of the Western

www.dacoromanica.ro

provinces, which the Serbs also coveted. He stayed in those regions for some time, capturing the castles one after another, to the time when he was received into Thessalonica itself, the metropolis of the West, where he cured his foot, which had been wounded in a skirmish, with the balm which dropped from the bones of St. Demetrius. His supporters at Constantinople, after all, welcomed him into the great imperial city, where he found his grandfather on his knees in front of a wonder-working image, imploring to be saved (1328). His life was spared, and he was able to live tranquilly in his vast palace, now completely abandoned, overrun by horses, asses, oxen and poultry, while the common women came to wash their linen at the fountains in the great deserted courtyards. He took the cowl, under the new name of Antony; he signed in red and black, and styled himself, "the most pious and most Christian lord, Antony, emperor and monk." His death at a very advanced age called forth no emotion; he had long been forgotten in that capital which belonged to another.

Andronicus III. had put out of his way his uncle Constantine, whom he first of all threw into an oubliette, an old well, where a bucket striking his head announced his daily portion of bread and water. Another despot and member of the imperial family, Demetrius, led resignedly an inconspicuous life. Andronicus had not then any competitors. Much loved by the aristocracy of Constantinople, he hunted with enormous packs which astonished the people, and frequently went out to fight the bands of barbarians which infested the coast and the valleys of Thrace. He died before the age of fifty (1341), leaving the throne to a child who was barely nine years old. Byzantium once more, as in the days of the Comneni, saw a foreign queen-regent, while a mayor of the palace, Apokaukos, who was suspected of wishing to pave the way for the reign of his son-in-law Andronicus, a Paleologus, held the power, and had as an opponent a relation of the Imperial House, the foremost man of his time, John Cantacuzene, who had been the intimate friend of the dead emperor, and his constant adviser and right hand.

(*f*) *Rivals for the Throne of John Cantacuzene.*—In the

www.dacoromanica.ro

course of the same year which saw the death of Andronicus the younger, 1341, the civil war broke out afresh, exactly reproducing the events which had occurred ten years before during the struggle for the crown between the two Andronici. Cantacuzene's policy was that of a persecuted man claiming some guarantee; he had on his side the *barons*, the ἄριστοι, and the citizens of certain towns, while the populace of Constantinople, the δῆμος, was for the child-emperor John V. Once more the Bulgars, partisans of the dynasty of the Paleologi, and the Serbs, who hoped to gain by sheltering and aiding the rebel, interfered in the dispute. The "Cantacuzenists," like the partisans of Andronicus III. before, held possession of Demotica, whence they watched Constantinople, as well as of the castles of Macedonia, and they endeavoured to seize Thessalonica. At a given moment Cantacuzene, hitherto vicar of the empire, proclaimed himself emperor, being crowned by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. No scruples weighed with either side; if Cantacuzene retained in the official prayers the name of John V. and the empress Anne, if he did not wear the buskins and the purple cloak, preferring the white colour which the family mourning prescribed, he nevertheless offered to the Serbs the fortresses in Macedonia, and he called in more than once to his aid the barbarians of Asia, the insatiable raiders from Aidin, Saroukhen, Karasi, and Bithynia, the people of the emirs of the coast districts, of Oumour, Khidr, Soliman, Ourkhan, and the sons of this latter. A Byzantine princess, the daughter of that John VI., was married to the old Moslem prince of Nicea in order that the cause of Cantacuzene might be completely guaranteed by the help of the most numerous and bold rulers among the Turks. Up to this date no Byzantine emperor had ever condescended to such an alliance, contrary alike to the traditions and obligations of his creed. A little later this example found imitators; the Servian Kral offered one of his daughters to a "prince" of Ourkhan, and John V., Paleologus, married his only daughter to Khalil, son of the same emir. On her side, the regent Anne and Apokaukos, whose advice she followed implicitly, did not fail, while trying to assassinate or

www.dacoromanica.ro

poison her enemy, to summon to her aid the Moslem emirs, who were, however, more keen for the cause of Cantacuzene, who was well known to them by his activity in the time of the emperor Andronicus.

(*g*) *John Cantacuzene Emperor.*—A revolt of the political prisoners in Constantinople brought about the death of Apokaukos. Cantacuzene was prevented from deriving any benefit from this murder. He succeeded, in February 1347, in becoming master of Constantinople. John V. was relegated to Thessalonica, where he lost no opportunities of stirring up sedition. He went over to Ænos, on the coast of Thrace, then into the island of Tenedos, always haunted by the fear of Cantacuzene, whose daughter Helena he had in the meantime married. His Latin friends put him once more in possession of his capital in December 1354. John VI. went into a convent, and his empress Irene followed his example. Matthew, the eldest son of these princes, wished nevertheless to keep the imperial crown which he had taken in 1352, rather contrary to his father's wish; he abandoned his secured position in order to fight, but was soon conquered and had to abandon all his hopes. The other son of the old Cantacuzene, Manuel, was contented with his possessions in the Morea. John Paleologus, now a youth of twenty, was then left sole master of the fragments of the empire, but under the most deplorable conditions.

CHAPTER VI

THE PROLOGUE TO THE TURKISH CONQUEST—ADVENT OF THE OSMANLIS IN EUROPE

(*a*) *Relations with the Serbs and the Bulgars.*—There was nothing for John IV. to fear on the side of the Bulgars or the Serbs, the traditional enemies of the empire. The Czar Alexander was united by a new family alliance with the Paleologi after having retaken the disputed ports of the Black Sea, Anchialos and Mesembria. The great Czar

www.dacoromanica.ro

Stephen Doushan had died at Diavoli, on imperial soil, and three pretenders disputed for this newly created empire of Servia, which was, naturally, still too fragile to be able to resist the terrible shock of these rival ambitions. The Tatars, on the other side of the Danube, had been forced to give way to the Roumanian princes of Wallachia, or of "all the Roman country," and of Moldavia; the Wallachian dynast Vladislav was in 1370 a very powerful lord who held all the country as far as the Danube. Finally the kingdom of Hungary, under the Angevin Louis of Naples, had schemes as regards the East which could not damage the Byzantine interests, for they provoked conflicts between the Hungarians and Serbs on the Danube.

(*b*) *The Turks as Auxiliaries of the Byzantine Parties.*—The great danger threatened from the East, where a change of policy and direction was evident on the side of the Turks. They did not present themselves as natural antagonists of the Christian religion and empire, nor did they pose as conquerors. On the contrary, notwithstanding their military power—which must not be over-estimated, for it was several times crushed by the Crusaders, who in 1344 took Smyrna from the emir of Aidin—and notwithstanding the number and quality of their archers and cavalry, they still yielded with tolerable grace to the humiliating ancient ceremonies which Byzantium required from all barbarian chiefs without distinction. They obeyed the orders of the *basileus* who summoned them before him, or they excused themselves with many plausible words backed up by presents. They got down from their horses in the presence of the imperial majesty, went on their knees and kissed penitently the purple buskin adorned with gold and precious stones. On one occasion a Turkish prince, who was, however, the son-in-law of the emperor, caused astonishment by entering the court of the palace riding by the side of his father-in-law, who wore the incomparable Roman crown; it was only after many exhortations that the son of the powerful emir Ourkhan consented to wear the heavy burden of that honour. All this did not, however, prevent the Turkish soldiers from riddling

www.dacoromanica.ro

the sacred person of the emperor himself with arrows in the conflicts with the imperial troops. The blunt warriors adapted themselves, however, to the ancient practices of humble submission. The Turk Khalil, a predecessor of the emirs of the fourteenth century, having won, together with the camp of the emperor Michael, the *kalyptra* which graced the brow of the conqueror of Constantinople, perpetrated the rough jest of placing it on his own matted locks.

(*c*) *Encroachments by the Turkish Emirs.*—The aged Andronicus had vainly tried a great expedition against all those barbarians who came down from the mountains with their flocks, sent some of their young men to follow the profession of pirates or brigands in Thrace, collected tribute from the conquered towns, sold their captives and then returned to their mountain fastnesses. During the civil war of the two Andronici, Turkish piracy greatly increased; the first Turkish contingents appeared in the troops of the young emperor. Broussa was soon lost: Andronicus II. wished to save Nicea, and after a long interval of patient endurance the Greek inhabitants of Asia Minor saw a Rhomaic army coming to attempt a restoration. The Christians were at first successful at Pelekanon, then a mad panic seized them; they fled towards the coast, carrying in a blanket their wounded chief, while the barbarians of Ourkhan paraded the imperial horses, bright with red saddles. The consequence of this disaster was the capture of Nicea by these Bithynian Turks. The country was now conquered from end to end; the Turks became the true inhabitants of the fertile valleys. "They made," so runs the Chronicle of Gregoras, "their habitations on the Bithynian shore." The emperor was hardly able to save Nicomedia by his personal intervention. At the same time the fleet of Aidin became the dread of the southern seas; towards the year 1340, Oumour was the king of the sea, the θαλαττοκρατῶν, and his vessels went as far as the island of Crete and to the ports of southern Morea.

(*d*) *The Latin League against the Turks.*—A Latin league, to which the Holy See lent its countenance, was organised between the Venetians, Genoese, Cypriotes, and Knights

www.dacoromanica.ro

Hospitallers of Rhodes, against the emir of Smyrna. Some citizens of Genoa, the Zaccaria, had taken, in the vicinity of the Asiatic coast, without any declaration of war the large island of Chios and the two Phoceas, important for the output of alum. The empire retook these invaded provinces, but after some years it was the turn of Lesbos, conquered by the Cattanei; the Byzantines were forced to join the Turks in order to get rid of the Latin usurpers. Thanks to the crusade of 1344, Martin Zaccaria took his revenge by occupying for the second time the island of Chios and the fortress of Phocea. The empire this time had not the leisure to attempt any recovery. Oumour had been killed fighting against these rude Franks of the West; his successor concluded a treaty favourable to the Christians. Cantacuzene in vain allied himself with the Venetians, who did not display any intentions of conquest; he took part in the Veneto-Genoese war for the sovereignty in the Eastern seas, but he only brought defeats on the empire and more complete financial ruin at an era when men wore sham jewels of glass and when the crown treasury was pledged to Venice. John V. even offered Lesbos to that Gattilusio who brought him back to Constantinople.

(*e*) *First Turkish Military Colony in Europe.*—During all this interval of time, on the side of the Turks, the Byzantines had only to do with the bands of brigands, whom they employed in their dynastic disputes or against their Christian enemies of the moment, Bulgars, Serbs, or even Albanians. The Turks thus came to know every nook and corner of Thrace and Macedonia as far as the mountains of the Balkan and Pindus, which still bounded their horizon as brigands. Oumour on one occasion had seen at the side of his old friend, Cantacuzene, the splendour still left to the immense city of the emperors, which they were jointly besieging. The inhabitants of the provinces of Europe grew accustomed to the Turkish turbans and the loud battle-cries of the warriors, who before throwing themselves on the enemy sprinkled dust on their heads and raised their armed hands to heaven. The family alliances of the emirs with the

www.dacoromanica.ro

Cantacuzenes, Paleologi and Batatzes conferred on many a Moslem prince of Asia the prestige of a descendant of the old Rhomaic families.

It was not always easy to find at the favourable moment these auxiliaries so valuable from their courage and their loyalty to their hirer. John VI. therefore conceived the notion, which proved most disastrous to his State and race, of settling in Europe a colony of Turks who should be always at his command. He assigned Tzympe to these mercenaries, who came "with their wives and children." This policy resembled that which Frederick II. of Germany and Sicily had employed towards the Arabs of Luceria, with this notable difference that the emperor of the Byzantine decadence could not master these formidable allies, who had at their head Soliman, one of the sons of Ourkhan. Their constant pillaging showed the danger. When a great earthquake in 1354 dismantled the strong places of the province, the Turks penetrated everywhere and hid themselves in the houses which remained standing. A town as important as Gallipoli became Turkish. The inhabitants of Constantinople were forced to shelter the fugitives from the countries who could not agree to live under the Turkish tyranny, and the Capital itself, whose girdle of colossal walls had been shaken, feared to see the Turks enter the breaches as victors.

Ourkhan and Soliman soon disappeared. Khalil, the son-in-law of the emperor, did not succeed his father. Mourad, another son of Ourkhan, had his inheritance. The old relations of kinship and friendship were broken. With one victorious swoop the Bithynian troops obtained Demotica and a large number of castles and strong places on the coast, amongst others the modern Koum Bourgas and Tzouroulon, celebrated in Byzantine history. The Vizir Lala-Shahin governed from Gallipoli these European possessions of the sultan, his master. In Asia, Mourad had no rival, for the *emirate* of Karasi had disappeared, that of Saroukhan was drawing to a close, and even the country of Aidin was weakened by the competition of the successors of Oumour. Thus, having no opposition to fear either on this side or

www.dacoromanica.ro

from his Latin allies, Mourad was able to cross into Europe and take Andrinople, recently threatened by the Bulgars, and make it his capital.

(*f*) *The Turks form an European State in Thrace.*—The Turks of 1360 were no longer barbarians temporarily settled in an encampment which might be taken from them. They had now abandoned their ancient life as nomads; peasants were tilling the ground, artisans who had come from Asia were working in the cities; territorial lords were developing the new military fiefs distributed by the sultans, whom they served in war surrounded by their serfs. It was not a passing invasion but a permanent colonisation, which was destined soon to change the aspect of the provinces occupied.

After the capture of Andrinople, which as a Capital was clearly superior to the ancient Broussa where the first chiefs of the conquerors lay under the mausoleums they had themselves built, "Roum" became for the princes of the House of Osman the essential part of their numerous possessions. The government of Asia was entrusted to one of the sons of the sultan, who passed the autumn and winter months, when camp-life ordinarily ended, in the great palace of that Indirne on the Maritza, which was the true capital of the growing empire of the Infidels. As soon as the meadows grew green and the horses of the *spahis* could feed on the new grass, the heralds of the sovereign proclaimed the new war for the year which opened; they fixed the starting point of the armies, and round the fixed centre formed by the "Porte" with all its dignitaries, officers and pages of the seraglio, and by the few thousands of janissaries, children of Christians brought up to the profession of arms, were assembled under their already glorious oriflammes the contingents of the various *sandjakats*, of which the ever-growing heritage of the first Osman was composed.

(*g*) *War between the Turks and the Slavs of the Balkans.*—The Turks for their part revived the rivalry between the rulers of the Black Sea and the Servian masters of Macedonia. The death of Doushan and the disputes for the succession considerably facilitated their task. They soon

www.dacoromanica.ro

swept away the feeble rule of the petty princes who were lodged in the castles of the mountains of Pindus. Even in those regions they took part in the conflicts with the Albanians, Genevisi, Doucashin, Balsha and Thopia. The Servian attack, led by King Voucashine and the despot Ugliesha, was crushed in 1371 in that battle fought on the banks of the Maritza, which confirmed the Turks in the possession of Andrinople. The "count" Lazare, whom his followers styled "Kral," wished, with the help of Tvrtko his Bosnian neighbour, once more to attempt the task of deliverance. He was victor in the battle of Plochnik, but two years after he lost his army, his crown and his life in the great fight of Kossovo (1389), where the sultan Mourad also perished, assassinated by one of the heroes of Servian legend. His son Stephen, whom Byzantium honoured later with the title of despot, obtained on the occasion of his marriage with a princess of the Imperial House, was compelled to pay the *kharadj*, and to pledge himself to take part in all the expeditions of his lord the sultan.

The end of Bulgaria was less tragic and bloody. The sons of the Czar Alexander divided his dominions as "hostile brothers," the one lived at Vidin, the other retained his residence at Trnovo, while the usurper Dobrotich, and, after him, his son remained masters of the littoral. By 1393 the Bulgarian Capital belonged to the sultan Baiazid; Vidin submitted, then revolted, only to fall again at once into the power of the Osmanlis, who made it into the seat of a frontier-pacha, a Turkish "marquis," governor of the shores of the Danube against the Hungarians and the Roumanians, whose power of expansion was soon checked.

CHAPTER VII

LAST DAYS OF CONSTANTINOPLE (1400-1453)

(*a*) *Popular Feeling at Byzantium.*—The Greek empire was like a beleaguered town. It was totally unable to move,

www.dacoromanica.ro

and was forced to contemplate on every side the Turkish danger rapidly advancing to sweep away the last relics of the Roman Eastern world. The historic mission of Byzantium, Roman and Christian, was finally closed after more than a thousand years. The State of the Paleologi, reduced to pitiable limits, was only awaiting the *coup de grâce*.

The consciousness of the impending shipwreck, of the last fatal plunge, was not brought home to the masses of the Greek people who lived in Constantinople, in the towns of the Black Sea, in Thessalonica and in that distant Byzantine oasis of the isolated Peloponnese. The old life had remained unaltered, and it seemed natural to believe that it was eternal. The capital of the Bosphorus preserved its enormous size, its imposing walls, its glorious monuments, its flourishing commerce, which was not, however, sufficient to pay the numerous creditors of Pera and Venice, from whom the emperors had borrowed heavy loans on most uncertain security —Constantinople still fed some hundreds of thousands of inhabitants. No reduction had been made in the ceremonies, the pomp and the visible luxury of the palace, the court, the "Great Church," the public offices and the principal houses of the cosmopolis. Everything remained as in former days, and the credulous populace was led to believe that there would always be a to-morrow. Was there not, after all, a guarantee for this perpetuity of the one orthodox and legitimate empire in the prophecies which asserted that the Turkish victors could not penetrate further than the column where the archangel would appear to drive them back with a fiery sword in his hand? Was there not, to reassure the most timid, the manifest protection, proved so many times from the days of the Arabs, of the Blessed Virgin, the guardian of the city, who did not fail to perform her miracles for her own loyal folk in Constantinople, the most Christian capital of the emperor, the θεόστεπτος, crowned by the grace of God? And, while Constantinople still lived, could the hope of regaining all that had been lost be abandoned, when the work of restoration had so often started from that city which was worth all the others put together?

www.dacoromanica.ro

(*b*) *Appeal of John V. Paleologus to Latin Europe.*—The emperors naturally entertained fewer illusions than their subjects. John V., son of the Savoyard princess, thought it his duty to summon Latin Europe to his aid; he offered once more in exchange the sacrifice of the patriarchal ambitions of the Greek world, the precious holocaust of the ancient and so often contested dogma. He made his declaration of union at Rome; he implored the help of the chivalrous Angevin of Bude, who always pretended to be fitting out a crusade which he never undertook. He had finally to suffer on account of the Bulgar of Trnovo, who did not hesitate to bar the way as the emperor returned from Hungary. Then his kinsman, Count Amedeus of Savoy, who loved distant adventures, and had vowed a crusade for the salvation of his soul, hastened to his succour. The brilliant knight, famous in the tournaments of the West, before storming the Bulgarian castles of the Black Sea littoral, succeeded in capturing Gallipoli from the Turks (1366), who recovered it, however, a few months later.

Three years afterwards the emperor himself was seen in Italy and then at Avignon, where he had come to explain his miserable position. There were times when he borrowed money for the necessaries of life, and when his Venetian creditors prevented him from leaving his palace. His second son, Manuel, ultimately transmitted to him the means for returning to Constantinople, but he no longer possessed the crown jewels, which he had been compelled to pawn.

(*c*) *Struggles between the Italians of the East.*—Although he had made a solemn declaration before the Pope, he received no help; yet under his very eyes the Venetians and the Genoese were fighting for the possession of Tenedos, which he had abandoned to the former. Genoa, as well as the sultan Mourad even planned the usurpation of the eldest son of John V., Andronicus, whom his father had blinded, by order of the sultan, for having organised with an Ottoman prince a plot which was intended to place new chiefs over the Greeks as well as the Turks of Europe. The treaty of 1381 put an end to hostilities. Tenedos remained a desert for many years.

www.dacoromanica.ro

(*d*) *The Crusade of Nicopolis.*—Once again, after the conquest of Bulgaria by the Sultan Baiazid, a desperate appeal was addressed to the Hungarians, and, by the agency of their king, Sigismund of Luxembourg, to the knights of the West. The great expedition of new combatants for the Cross, which was composed of French, Germans and Hungarians, supported and advised by Mircea, the prince of Wallachia, disappeared in the great disaster of Nicopolis on the Danube, in 1396.

A new journey of the emperor Manuel, son and successor of John V., bore no better fruit than that which his father had undertaken thirty years before. The proud and poor royal traveller was accorded official receptions, but that was the extent of his success. Baiazid, however, laid siege to Constantinople, which he would doubtless have taken had not Timour, the great khan of the Tatars, made a triumphal entry into the region of Asia Minor. He soon crushed at Angora, in 1402, the career of the impetuous sultan of the Turks, who died in a captivity, of which he must deeply have felt the degradation after so many brilliant exploits.

(*e*) *Results of the Capture of Baiazid I. at Angora.*—It was thanks to this battle at Angora with all its consequences that Byzantium was able to prolong for another half-century its pitiable existence. In 1402 the degenerate empire, shrunk to the smallest proportions, paid tribute to the sultan; it furnished under the orders of the heir to the throne a military contingent to the Ottoman armies; a cadi or Turkish judge had been accepted at Constantinople. The former appanage of Prince Andronicus, the towns of the Black Sea, Selymbria, Panidos, Rhodostos, Heraclea, had been recently invaded by the sultan. Thessalonica, which had been for some time entrusted to the care of Prince Manuel, had been conquered, and John V. had not even ventured to receive his poor fugitive son, who had first to go into the Ottoman camp to surrender himself into the hands of the Turkish *basileus*, his true master. The son of the emperor Cantacuzene had died in Morea, and his successor Theodore, brother of Manuel, with difficulty maintained his position in the peninsula, where the

www.dacoromanica.ro

Genoese Centurione Zaccaria, representative in the earlier days of the king of Naples, reigned as an independent prince over the Latin Achaia; he even appealed to the Knights Hospitallers of Rhodes, in order to cede to them his towns and castles. On their side the Venetians had held Argos since 1394, and the Turks of Evrenos-Beg, who had already penetrated into the peninsula, did not delay to annex it to their territory. The Turkish fleet ruled the sea and exacted all it wished from the islands still remaining Byzantine.

The condition in which the remnants of the old empire then lay was desperate. John VII., son of the pretender Andronicus, whom Manuel had left imperial vicegerent at Constantinople, only reigned "in the interior of Constantinople," according to the mournful assertion of Ducas, one of the chroniclers of the Moslem conquest.

(*f*) *Successor of Sultan Baiazid; Internal Quarrels of the Turks.*—The defeat and capture of Baiazid roused to revolt all the weak powers which this great sultan had almost crushed. The Caraman of Asia Minor, the despot of Servia, the prince of Wallachia were able to lead a more free existence. The emperor also turned the battle of Angora to his account. In the tedious wars for the succession of Baiazid he supported now one of the candidates, now another, asking each time for his reward. Sometimes his choice was unerring; he made, however, some mistakes by supporting a prince who was destined soon to disappear. Thessalonica thus became the appanage of the despot Andronicus, one of the sons of Manuel. Mahomet I., who succeeded in reuniting all the provinces won by the Osmanlis, also ceded to the Byzantines the province of the Black Sea, which then became another appanage of the prince imperial. Hostages of the House of Osman now lived at Constantinople and kept in check through fear the sultan, who reigned on friendly terms with the Paleologi. Theodore of Morea became the most powerful lord in the peninsula, where the Turkish advance had stopped. The emperor himself went to his brother in order to fortify the Isthmus of Corinth with a long wall. On the return from this expedition the old *basileus* and the

www.dacoromanica.ro

new monarch, Manuel and Mahomet, were to be seen talking to each other as friends on their vessels in the roadstead of Gallipoli. The Venetians soon annihilated the Turkish fleet in the vicinity of the Hellespont, and the sultan was compelled to make peace before he had avenged an insult which a Mourad I. or a Baiazid would not have lightly brooked.

(*g*) *Continuation of these Quarrels after the Death of Mahomet I.*—The Byzantines thought to be able to extend their rule on the death of Mahomet I., who was killed by an accident out hunting, by turning to account the disputes between the son of the sultan, Mourad II., and his rivals the two Mustaphas, the one a son of Baiazid, the other a brother of the new chief of the House of Osman. But Mustapha I. was not in a condition to relieve even the town of Gallipoli which the emperor had come to besiege. Mourad II. actually proceeded to invest Constantinople, which the Turks attacked for the third time, for Sultan Mousa, son of Baiazid, had also strained every effort to capture it. In the end the new emperor, John VIII., who reigned in the place of his old father, Manuel, had to be content to pay an annual tribute of 300,000 pieces of silver for the permission to retain Mesembria and Derkos, on the coast, and the remote Zeitoun.

(*h*) *Wars of Mahomet I.*—Thessalonica was sold by the poor epileptic despot to the Venetians, who, hated by the Greek and Jewish population, soon lost it again after an attack of the Turks which was only half-heartedly made. An invasion of Tourakhan, the new *flambulario* of Thessaly, destroyed the fortifications of the isthmus and appreciably weakened the situation of the other despot, Theodore, brother of Manuel, who, however, held his own up to his death among the remains of his possessions.

Mourad had also attacked Servia, which he considered as his heritage, for the despot Stephen was dead. Vouk Brankovich, the lord who had seized the power, had to marry one of his daughters, Mara, to the sultan. The Byzantines allied themselves with George by giving him for his second wife a princess of the blood of the Cantacuzenes, and by conferring on him the dignity of despot.

www.dacoromanica.ro

(*i*) *Union of the Churches at the Council of Florence.*—As the sultan became every year a greater danger, John VIII. decided to follow the example of his father and grandfather by making a tour in the West. He set out, however, with far more pomp and a larger suite, for he took with him his entire court, his younger brother the despot Demetrius, and quite a crowd of metropolitans and bishops, with the Patriarch Joseph himself at their head. After a brilliant reception at Venice, the imperial Byzantine cortège moved on to Ferrara to take part in the Great Council of Union, which was intended to confer fresh lustre on the papacy, now disputing with the advocates of reform still assembled at Basle. The sittings were soon held in the large and rich city of Florence, where the terms of the reunion of the Eastern Church with the Apostolic Church were drawn up and signed (1439). One of the signatories to this document, the learned Bessarion of Nicea, was created cardinal; the old patriarch, who died at Florence, was buried in a Latin church; the basilica of St. Sophia was soon given over to the new ritual in conformity with the Council of Florence. But Mark Eugenicus, the champion of the old Byzantine ambitions, was not the only one to protest; the population of Constantinople energetically disapproved of this compromise, which was concluded in order to retard the complete disintegration of the empire, and the churches, where the name of the pope was pronounced in the liturgical prayers, became by this one fact profane in the eyes of the faithful, who did not wish to abandon the tradition of their ancestors.

(*j*) *Hungarian Help: John Corvine.*—A crusade was, however, organised. At the end of a series of campaigns conducted against the Turks by the Roumanian John of Inidoara in Transylvania (Hunyadi), now become captain-general of the Hungarian forces and even lieutenant of the kingdom, a coalition was formed to expel the Turks from Europe. Breaking the truce recently concluded, the Hungarians, the king and the papal legate at their head, advanced to Varna, while the pontifical fleet cut the communications in the straits, and the emperor of Constantinople, filled with renewed hopes, awaited the

www.dacoromanica.ro

result of this new struggle against invading Islam. A rash act of heroism on the part of King Vladislav of Hungary and Poland cost him his life and lost a battle, already half won (November 1444). John VIII. hastened to proffer his humble congratulations to the victors, and his brothers, Constantine and Thomas, who had restored the wall of Heximilion across the isthmus, and had further improved their position by taking Thebes and all Bœotia, were compelled to watch impotently the campaign of recovery and vengeance, which followed the victory of Varna.

(*k*) *The Last Emperors of Byzantium.*—John VIII. soon died (1448). He only left brothers. They had long quarrelled for the succession, and had come by turns to Constantinople or the appanage of Selymbria in order to keep a watch over it. One of them, Demetrius, went so far as to lay siege to the city with the help of the Turks. The elder of these last Paleologi, Constantine, son of a Servian princess of Macedonia, obtained, however, the dangerous imperial inheritance without a conflict.

The beginning of his reign was pacific, except for the incessant changes produced in Morea by the short-sighted ambition of the despots and *authentopouli* Theodore, Demetrius and Thomas; but these changes had only a local importance. The old Sultan Mourad, who had recovered the power entrusted before the battle of Varna to his impetuous young son Mahomet, was busied in facing the incessant attacks of the indefatigable John Hunyadi. It was otherwise when at his death, in 1451, Mahomet became chief of the Osmanlis.

The young "tchelebi" Mahomet, brought up on the Eastern legends about Alexander of Macedon and on the stories in the chronicles telling of the lives and exploits of the Roman emperors, was devoured by the passion to accomplish great and unheard-of deeds. But before everything—before completing the destruction of Servia, before subjugating the Albanians, annexing Morea, dislodging the Venetians from their Eastern colonies, invading Italy and, on the Asiatic side, crushing out of existence the poor empire of Trebizond, occupying Sinope and Castemouni, and driving back into

www.dacoromanica.ro

central Asia his most powerful rival, the Turcoman Ouzoun-Hassan—he appreciated the necessity of conquering Constantinople.

He began by building at Kataphygia a castle with three tall towers, from which he proposed to watch the passage of every ship through the Bosphorus and impose on them the payment of the Ottoman customs. The protests of the feeble emperor Constantine and his efforts to offer armed resistance proved futile. The empire thus lost one of its principal resources.

(*l*) *Capture of Constantinople by the Turks.*—Then in the spring of the year 1453 he proclaimed the Holy War against the imperial city. A countless number of old soldiers, peasants armed with clubs, shepherds, and even dervishes, flocked to it, enticed by the high pay and the attraction of the incomparable loot of Byzantium. On Friday in Holy Week Mahomet himself arrived, a second Nebuchadnezzar for the Greeks, accompanied by his court and his janissaries. He brought with him a large number of cannons, one of which, constructed by a Roumanian, evoked the admiration of the whole army. A strong fleet, commanded by Baltioglou, the chief of the arsenal of Gallipoli, proceeded to manœuvre on the other side of the promontory which shut in the celebrated gulf of the Golden Horn. The army corps of Karadschabeg had already subjugated the province of the Black Sea, except for the town of Selymbria. Constantinople was completely cut off. She could not capitulate in any case; she was bound to resist to the bitter end, cost what it might.

The emperor had collected ample provisions, but he had at his disposal less than 5000 men, mostly Greeks of the Capital, a timid and untrustworthy race. Pera had offered him a large vessel just come from Genoa. The Venetian merchantmen of the Black Sea had been requisitioned to help in the defence. John Giustiniano Longo, a Genoese, had brought two galleys and some hundreds of fighting men, protected by heavy brass cuirasses which impressed the Turks; he was immediately nominated *protostrator* and the island of Lemnos was promised him.

www.dacoromanica.ro

The great cannon began to bombard the gate of St. Romanus, where the sultan was. The engagement became general, sometime before sunrise, without any special advantage on the side of the Turks. The defenders, Greeks and Latins, were animated by one spirit as brothers-in-arms. Men recalled to each other the four sieges which had followed in less than fifty years, from which, thanks to the invocation of the Virgin, the city had emerged unscathed. But the sultan carried the fleet, which he had obtained from Hieron into the Golden Horn by means of an inclined tramway of greased planks; he constructed on empty barrels a fighting-platform which was invaluable to him; finally he carried out his plan for setting fire to his ships.

During the night of the 28th-29th May watchfires blazed all night in the Turkish camp, a sign that the general assault was fixed for the next day. It began by loud war-cries a little before dawn. After a few minutes' fighting Longo, who was the soul of the defence, was wounded and left his post; his men followed him. A great panic ensued among the Greeks who had seen his departure. The Turks grasped the importance of the moment. They succeeded in entering by the little postern gate which the Genoese had opened at that place. Soon the tall white felt caps of the janissaries were seen on the summit of the walls, which were immediately cleared of their defenders. The city was taken, although for hours isolated posts were still fighting the enemy, who did not know the good news.

Blood-stained fugitives soon struck consternation into the great city, which was tranquilly preparing to celebrate the high festival of Saint Theodosia. When the populace was convinced that they were telling the truth, a great wave of panic swept a whole population, thousands of rich and poor, dignitaries and common people, members of the upper clergy, priests, monks and nuns, into the vast basilica of St. Sophia, which hitherto had been denounced as profane owing to the Latin "heresy." The Turks arrived there, more eager for booty than for blood, for they only slew at the first instant, fearing in that labyrinth of narrow alleys a long and desperate

www.dacoromanica.ro

resistance, which they did not, however, find. They were content to pick out hastily the captives whom they could carry off, in which process each man tried to outdo his neighbour, while they despatched all useless prisoners in order to save time. Every street was searched, every house ransacked, for the sultan had only reserved for himself the ownership of the buildings and the soil.

The emperor had fallen at the very beginning. "Is there no one to cut my head off?" he said, turning towards his men who were flying panic-stricken. But nobody heard him. He went back into the terrible mêlée, where it was impossible to recognise any face. A Turk struck him on the head, a second sabre-cut killed him. His lifeless body was crushed under the hurrying steps of the victors. Later only a young soldier remembered that he had killed a man resembling the emperor of Roum, who was so eagerly looked for. He indicated the place where he had achieved his exploit, and in the middle of the piled-up corpses were discovered the golden eagles on the purple buskins splashed with gore.

Mahomet, drunk with wine at the end of a banquet, ordered the Grand-Duke Luke Notaras to be killed, with all his family, because he had refused to give up his child to gratify the lusts of the conqueror. The old man, who had seen his own relations die, was one of the last victims. Then the sultan, who felt that he was now emperor, collected together the inhabitants who had not been sold; he gave the Greeks, according to the old ceremonial, a new patriarch in the person of the professor, the *scholarios*, George, who had become the monk Gennadios; he rebuilt the walls as soon as possible; he cleared away the débris, and soon embellished the fair city with palaces, towers and baths; he assigned whole quarters of the town to the Turks, and he sent new colonists of every race, from each town which was captured, into his Stamboul.

www.dacoromanica.ro

EPILOGUE

After the month of June 1453, the "Conqueror" imposed a tribute on the despots of the Morea and commanded the emperor of Trebizond to come and do homage to the "Porte." After a campaign against the Serbs, the fleet, having Admiral Hamza at its head, sailed to subjugate Lesbos, Cos and Rhodes, without success, however. But the other islands, which had belonged to the very end to the Byzantines, Imbros, Lemnos, Thasos, Samothrace, soon accepted the sovereignty of the sultan. Ænos, on the coast of Thrace, surrendered to the new masters of Constantinople. New Phocea had already submitted. Lesbos and Chios, finally, took rank among the tributaries of the Porte. The expedition of the pontifical fleet, which was fitted out in 1455, against the Turkish islands won some successes, but its conquests were not lasting.

It was now the turn of the despot of Morea. In 1458 Mahomet himself took Corinth and Patras, while the Turkish fleet cruised off the Cyclades. A second and decisive campaign followed in 1460. Long dissensions between the Albanians and the Paleologi had precipitated events; the despots had even applied to the sultan to make the rebels acknowledge their authority. A number of Albanian chiefs, as well as of whole villages, were drawn into ambushes and murdered. Demetrius, the despot, sent his daughter to the sultan's harem; he followed as a captive the army of Mahomet II. on its return; in the end he was given lands and revenues in Thrace, where he died in obscurity. His brother and enemy, Thomas, followed for some time the movements of the conquering army, and then embarked for Italy; he lived some years at Rome, supported by a pension which the pope gave him in return for his sympathy with the Union; the members of his family went over to

www.dacoromanica.ro

Catholicism completely; this exiled Paleologus had two male heirs, of whom one, Andrew, had no children, and the other thought to improve his fortunes by adopting Islam.

But three wars against Venice and the successive captures of Argos (1463), Negropont (1470), Lepanto (1499), and of Coron and Modon (1500), were necessary before the Turks were finally in possession of the Morea.

The empire of Trebizond still existed maintained by Ouzoun-Hassan, who had married one of the princesses of the imperial family, a descendant of the Comneni, now become a wife, in the Turkish fashion, of this rough Turcoman. A corrupt dynasty and a supine ruling class lent feeble support to this little State, which possessed great wealth and a soil of incomparable fertility. John Comnenus, a veritable monster, had thrown into prison his father and his mother, whom he accused of adultery and even wished to kill. He fled with his wife, the daughter of the king of Iberia, before a general movement of indignation, but returned and took the crown from his father, who was assassinated—against the usurper's will, so he declared. Trebizond was even invaded by the janissaries, but John ransomed himself by payment of a tribute of 3000 ducats.

After his death (1458) his brother David ousted the child who had inherited the throne. In 1461 the sultan invited him to cede his possessions; he demanded a large compensation and the honour of having the sultan for son-in-law. His claims were rejected, and the janissaries took the city by storm. David and his family were brought to Andrinople, with those of the young men of Trebizond, who were destined to be *silihdars* or *spahoglans*, pages at the court, or to serve in the ranks of the janissaries. One of the sons of David, George, became a proselyte in the hopes of a career. But the correspondence of the Comneni with Ouzoun having been intercepted, they were all beheaded, except, of course, the unhappy imperial princess, who swelled the ranks of the women of every nationality and race in his harem.

The conquest of Lesbos, defended by Domenico, the patricide and last representative of the vigorous dynasty of

www.dacoromanica.ro

the Gattilusii of Genoa, and related to the Paleologi, almost completed the insular domain of the Archipelago. Naxos and Paros retained for years their autonomy under Christian, or even Jewish, dukes, nominated by the Porte in return for payment. Cyprus lastly was not conquered until 1570, and Crete a century later in 1669.

Thus, two centuries after the conquest of Constantinople, the last traces of Christian government disappeared in these imperial regions.

www.dacoromanica.ro

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CRITICISM

The first place must be given to E. Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Gibbon's great work is not a history, properly so called, of the Byzantine Empire, since it begins with the classical and purely Latin times of the *imperium*, and its point of view is not that of the development of the political form and the civilisation of Byzantium; but it has not yet been superseded in its own line. Professor Bury has recently edited a new edition, in which the notes and especially the chronology have been brought up to date. (London, 1896 *et seq.*).

For details and especially for a cleverly written anecdotal history of the empire, the reader may still consult *l'Histoire du Bas Empire*, by Lebeau; the thirty volumes of the first edition have been republished in twenty-one of larger size by Saint-Martin, who has been at pains to enrich the work with chapters and notes, the materials for which have been taken from Armenian and other Oriental sources.

Finlay's *History of Greece from its Conquest by the Romans to the Present Time* (seven volumes, Oxford, 1877) is also useful; but it is not a history of the Byzantine Empire, being inspired rather by a love of Greece even after her fall.

The great scholar of Königsberg, the best authority on the Italian archives so far as the East is concerned, Karl Hopf, merely wished in his "Geschichte Griechenlands vom Beginn des Mittelalters bis auf unsere Zeit" (in the Encyclopædia of Ersch and Gruber) to give a systematic chronology of the history of the Hellenic territory, with some additional information about the empire of Constantinople. This compilation is extremely inaccessible to readers; but scholars appreciate its freshness and accuracy.

Dr. Hertzberg, having undertaken to provide the great collection of Universal History, edited by Oncken, with a sketch of the development of the Byzantine Empire, and the subsequent Turkish Empire down to Soliman the Great, was forced to weave together two civilisations which are not precisely similar, and his compilation is deficient in clearness of plan and general conception. It is, however, to be recommended for the deep study of previous works and its attractive style (*Geschichte der Byzantiner und des osmanischen Reiches bis gegen Ende des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1883). Hertzberg has also written a *Geschichte Griechenlands* (Gotha, 1876-8), which corresponds to those of Finlay and Hopf.

Gfrörer, who displayed a searching and almost excessive critical faculty,

www.dacoromanica.ro

with a marked grasp of local history and an unusual perception of all the minute connecting threads of history, had studied the whole extent of the Byzantine Empire. Some part of his teaching has been preserved in the *Byzantinische Geschichten* (Graz, 1872-7), published after his death. This is undoubtedly the most intelligent and most original work which has been written on the subject.

A really scientific work, which was new in many points and has lived owing to the modern views of history held by the author and the ingenious comparisons with other epochs of history, is the *Abriss* of H. Gelzer, who completed the second edition of Krummacher's *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur* (Munich, 1897). Gelzer had undertaken to write a new history of the Byzantine Empire for the Lamprecht collection, but his recent death (1906) prevented the execution of his project.

It is sufficient to refer to the brief or obsolete works of Paparrhegopoulos, Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἔθνους [Athens, 1887-8; Epitome in French, Paris, 1878]; of Roth (*Geschichte des byzantinischen Reiches* in Göschen's collection, Leipzig, 1904); and to the pages of Rambaud in *l'Histoire Générale*, which he has published in collaboration with Lavisse.

Professor Bury has also treated the history of the Byzantine Empire from Arcadius to Irene (*A History of the later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene*; 2 vols., London, 1889).

The best special work dealing with the political history of Byzantium is unquestionably Neumann's *Weltstellung des byzantinischen Reiches vor den Kreuzzügen* (Leipzig, 1894; recently translated into French in *Revue de l'Orient Latin*), which contains a clear and "philosophic" account, written in a very vivid style, of the state of the empire in the eleventh century.

The school of French Byzantinology was founded by Ch. Diehl, whose *Études sur l'administration byzantine dans l'exarchat de Ravenne* (Paris, 1888), and *l'Afrique byzantine* (Paris, 1896) were studies in local history, whilst his *Justinian et la Civilisation byzantine* ranks among the foremost historical works of the last century so far as facts, style and illustration are concerned. The later works of the same author cater perhaps too much to the taste of the public.

The large volumes of Gustave Schlumberger, bearing the poetical title *l'Épopée byzantine* (Paris, 1898), give a careful and detailed account of the successes achieved by the reviving empire, from Nicephorus Phocas to the Comneni. The history of the empire of Trebizond has been written by the great historical scholar Fallmerayer (*Geschichte des Kaisertums Trapezunt*, Munich, 1827), who has also treated the history of the Morea (*Geschichte der Halbinsel Morea*, Stuttgart-Tübingen, 1830-6). E. Gerland began in 1905 a *Geschichte des lateinischen Kaiserreiches*. The best imperial biographies are those of Rambaud (*l'Empire grec au X^e siècle*, Paris, 1870) and of Schlumberger (*Nicéphore Phocas*, Paris, 1890).

www.dacoromanica.ro

The labours of the Russian School which publishes the Review *Vizantinskij Vremennik* are not accessible to the general reader.

An admirable storehouse of information on Byzantine literature is the work of Krumbacher already mentioned. The same authority on contemporary Byzantinology edits the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*. A history of Byzantine literature in a more literary and philosophic sense remains to be written.

The Eastern Church has not yet been treated in a wide and impartial spirit. The best work on the relations between the Greek East and the Latin West is *Papstthum und Byzanz* by W. Norden (Berlin, 1903). On the patriarchs and bishops there is the *Oriens Christianus* of Le Quien (Paris, 1740) and the πατριαρχικοὶ πίνακες of Manuel Gedeon (Constantinople, 1890).

No history of Byzantine Commerce has yet been written. At present reference can be made to Heyd's book *Histoire du Commerce du Levant* (Paris, 1885-6).

Professor Strzygowski of Graz has published detailed studies on Byzantine Art (*vide* especially *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* I.).

For the topography of Constantinople there is the old and ponderous Byzantine History of Ducange (Paris, 1680) and the studies of Dr. Hardtmann (*Esquisse topographique de Constantinople*, Lille, 1892).

The Byzantine Chroniclers were first published, with Latin Commentaries, at Venice and Paris in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At Niebuhr's suggestion they were collected in a new, but servile and careless, edition in the *Corpus* of Bonn. German philologists (de Boor, Heisenberg, Reifferscheid) have recently published critical editions.

Byzantine Law may be studied on the permanent basis afforded by the great work of Zachariae von Lingenthal (*Jus græco-romanum*, Leipzig, 1856, etc.). The small number of Byzantine documents which have escaped so many catastrophes may be found collected in the *Acta et diplomata græca* of Miklosich and Müller (Vienna, 1860 *et seq.*). The Union of the Academies is preparing a *Corpus* of these scattered documents.

For the study of the literary monuments of the Byzantine epoch the modern Greek-English dictionary of E. A. Sophocles (3rd edition, New York, 1888) may be useful.

The best account of the capture of Constantinople by the Turks is the article by H. Vast in *Revue Historique* of 1880.

Krumbacher's *Geschichte der byz. Litteratur* also contains an admirably arranged bibliography of all that has been published about the Byzantine Empire down to 1896. The chronological table which follows is taken from this valuable work.

www.dacoromanica.ro

CHRONOLOGY OF THE EMPERORS OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Zeno, 474-491.
Anastasius, 491-518.
Justin I., 518-527.
Justinian (nephew of Justin), 527-565.
Justin II. (nephew of Justinian) 565-578.
Tiberius (son-in-law of Justin), 578-582.
Maurice (nominated by Tiberius), 582-602.
Phocas (usurper), 602-610.
Heraclius, 610-641.
Constantine III. and Heracleonas (sons of Heraclius), 641.
Constans (son of Constantine), 642-668.
Constantine IV. Pogonatus (son of Constans), 668-685.
Justinian Rhinotmetes (son of Constantine), 685-695 and 705-711.
Leontius (usurper), 695-698.
Tiberius III. (usurper), 698-705.
Philippicus (usurper), 711-713.
Anastasius II. (usurper), 713-716.
Theodosius III. (usurper), 716-717.

"Isaurians"

Leo III., 717-741.
Constantine V. Copronymus (son of Leo), 741-775.
Leo IV. (son of Constantine), 775-780.
Constantine VI. (son of Leo), 780-797.
Irene (mother of Constantine), 797-802.
Nicephorus, 802-811.
Stauracius (son of Nicephorus), 811.
Michael Rhangabes (brother-in-law of Stauracius), 811-813.
Leo the Armenian, 813-820.
Michael the Stammerer, 820-829.
Theophilus (son of Michael), 829-842.
Michael III. (son of Theophilus), 842-867.

Macedonians

Basil I., 867-886.
Leo the Philosopher (son of Basil), 886-911.
Alexander (brother of Leo and co-regent), 886-912.
Constantine VII. Porphyrogenitus (son of Leo), associated with Romanus Lecapenus, 912-959.
Romanus II. the younger (son of Porphyrogenitus), 959-963.

www.dacoromanica.ro

Nicephorus Phocas, 963-969.
John Tzimiskes, 969-976.
Basil Bulgaroktonos, 976-1025.
Constantine VIII. (his brother), 1025-1028.
Romanus III., Argyros (husband of Zoë, daughter of Constantine), 1028-1034.
Michael the Paphlagonian (married Zoë), 1034-1041.
Michael Kalaphates (nephew of preceding), 1041-1042.
Constantine Monomachos (husband of Zoë), 1042-1054.
Theodora (sister of Zoë), 1054-1056.
Michael VI. Stratioticus (nominated by Theodora), 1056-1057.
Isaac Comnenus, 1057-1059.
Constantine Ducas, 1059-1067.
Romanus Diogenes (husband of Eudocia, widow of Ducas), 1067-1071.
Michael Ducas Parapinaces (son of Eudocia), 1071-1078.
Nicephorus Botaniates (usurper), 1078-1081.
Alexios Comnenus (nephew of Isaac), 1081-1118.
John Comnenus (son of Alexios), 1118-1143.
Manuel Comnenus (son of John), 1143-1180.
Alexios II. Comnenus (son of Manuel), 1180-1183.
Andronicus I. Comnenus (a relation of John), 1183-1185.
Isaac Angelos (usurper), 1185-1195, 1203-1204.
Alexios III. (his brother), 1195-1203.
Alexios IV. (son of Isaac), 1203-1204.
Alexios V. Ducas (usurper), 1204.

Greek Emperors at Nicea

Theodore Lascaris (son-in-law of Alexios III.), 1204-1222.
John III. Ducas Batatzes (son-in-law of Theodore), 1222-1254.
Theodore II. Lascaris (son of John III.), 1254-1258.
John Lascaris (son of Theodore II.), 1258-1259.
Michael Paleologus (usurper), 1259-1261.

Greek Emperors at Constantinople

Michael Paleologus (now at Constantinople), 1261-1282.
Andronicus II. (son of Michael), 1282-1328.
Andronicus III. (grandson of Andronicus II.), 1328-1341.
John V. (son of Andronicus III.), 1341.
John VI. Cantacuzene (usurper), 1341-1354.
John V. (restored), 1354-1376 and 1379-1391.
Andronicus IV. (usurper), 1376-9.
John VII. (son of Andronicus IV., usurper), 1390.
Manuel (son of John V.), 1391-1425.
John VIII. (son of Manuel), 1425-1448.
Constantine surnamed Dragases (brother of John VIII.), 1448-1453.

www.dacoromanica.ro

INDEX

Alamanikon, the, 167
Alani, the, 186
Alexios Comnenus, 137
Almogabares, the, 197
Amalasuntha, 7
Amedeus, Count, 216
Anastasius, 14
Andrinople, capture of, 213
Andronicus Comnenus, 156
Andronicus II., 204
Andronicus III., 206
Angora, battle of, 217
Apokaukos, 207
Arabs, 55
  „ conquer Syria, 56
  „ attack empire, 62
  „ repelled by Leo the Isaurian, 66
  „ aggressive under Basil I., 88
Archontopouli, the, 138
Armenians, the, 73
Army, 6
  „ growing power of, 46
  „ demoralisation of, 61
  „ new Byzantine, 69
  „ under restored empire, 102
Asia, revolt of, 78
Avars, the, 38, *et sæpius*
Azeddin, Sultan, 194

Bahram, 43
Baiazid I., Sultan, 217
Baldwin, Emperor of Constantinople, 172
Barbarossa, Emperor Frederick at Constantinople, 166
Bardas, school of, 80, 97
Bardas Skleros, 110
Basil I., 82
Basil II., Bulgaroktonos, 112
Bela, King of Hungary, 154
Belisarius, 12
  „ victor over Vandals, 24
  „ disgraced, 29
Blachernes, church of, 79
Bogomiles, sect of, 113, 139
Bohemond, 144
Boris, prince of the Bulgars, 81
Botaniates, Nicephorus, 128
Bouillon, Geoffrey of, 147
Bryennios, Nicephorus, 126
Bulgars, 64
  „ Byzantine successes over, 69
  „ growth of Christianity among, 21
  „ destruction of Western empire of, 115
  „ *disunion of*, 201
  „ subject to Turks, 214
Byzantium, situation of, 4

Catalans, the, 197
Cantacuzene, Emperor John, 203, 208
Chosroes, 21, 53
Chosroantioch, 21
Christians, state of, in Syria, 67

www.dacoromanica.ro

Church, ceremonial of Byzantine, 8
Circus, factions in, 10, 13
Clergy, position of in restored empire, 99
Conrad, 153
Constans, 59
Constantine Psellos, 119
Constantine III., 59
Constantine IV., 59
Constantine V., 68
Constantine VI., 73
Constantine VII. (Porphyrogenitus), 92
Constantinople, founding of, 3
,, under restored empire, 104
,, captured by Latins, 172
,, captured by Greeks of Nicea, 181
,, by Turks, 224
Corippus, quoted, 39
Court, life at Byzantine, 5
Crete, conquest of, 105
Croum, chief of Bulgars, 76
Crusade, proclamation of First, 144
Crusade, Second, 153
Crusade, Third, 165
Crusaders, at Constantinople, 146
,, restore Isaac Comnenus, 170
Cumans, the, 123

Danelis, 89
Decadence of public spirit at Byzantium, 60
Delianus, leader of Bulgarian revolt, 123
Doushan, Stephen, 202

Ecumenical Council at Constantinople, 74
Emperor, personality of, at Byzantium, 32
,, prestige of in Tenth Century, 97
Empire, extent of under Justinian, 18
,, boundaries of under the Paleologi, 185
Empress, importance of, 5
Epirus, 174, 187.

Florence, Council of, 220
Foreigners, visits of to Byzantine Court, 6
Francopouli, the, 131

Gelimer, 23
Genoa, as a colonising power, 200
Genoese conclude treaty with Emperor Michael, 181
George, the Acropolite, 182
Greek as language of the empire, 33
Guiscard, Robert, 143

Henry VI., the Emperor, 166
Heraclius, 49, 53
Hippodrome, the, 10
Holobolos, the rhetorician, 190
Hormisdas, 43
Hungary, war with, 154
Huns, the, 19, 39

Iconoclasm, growth of, 70
Icons, worship of, 37
Ignatius, the patriarch, 81
Imperial defence, methods of, 30
Ionitsă (Kaloioannes), 173
Irene, Empress, 72
Isaac Angelos, 163
Isaac Comnenus, 129
Italian merchants, 159

Jerusalem, capture of, 147
John Asen, emperor of the Bulgars, 179
John Ducas, 180
John Hunyadi, 221
John (Ionitsă), emperor of the Balkans, 176
John Tzimiskes, 106

www.dacoromanica.ro

Justin I., 32
Justin II., 40
Justinian, 11, 13, 27, 31
Justinian Rhinotmetes, 60

Kerullarios, patriarch of Constantinople, 141
Khalifs, the, 62, 63
Kossovo, battle of, 214

Latin warriors at Byzantium, 140; more friendly relations with Greeks, 189
Law, reforms of, by Justinian, 31; by Basil I., 85
Lebounion, battle of, 134
Leo I., 23
Leo, the Armenian, 77
Leo, the Isaurian, 64
Leo Tornikios, 125
Lion's Mount, battle of, 134
Lombards, arrival at Constantinople, 131

Mahomet, conqueror of Constantinople, 221
Maniakes, proclamation of, 123
Mantzikert, battle of, 128
Manuel Comnenus, 149
Maurice, Emperor, 43
Mervan, 66
Michael Rhangabes, 76
,, the Stammerer, 77
,, III., 83
,, the Paphlagonian, 120
,, Kalaphates, 121
,, Ducas, 124
,, Stratiotikos, 129
,, Paleologus, 181
Middle empire, the administration of the, 101
Moguls, the, 199
Mohammed, 54
Monks, persecution of, 72
Monophysitism, 13, 37
Montferrat, Boniface, Marquis of, 168
Moors, the, 25
Moravians, conversion of the, 81
Mosynopolis, defeat of Normans at, 163
Mourad, 212
Mousaion, creation of the, 119
Myriokephalon, battle of, 150

Narses, 29, 41
Navy, the Byzantine, 116
Nicea, Sultan of, 135
,, emperors of, 179 *et seq.*
Nicephorus, reforms of emperor, 75
Nicopolis, crusade of, 217
Nogai, Khan of the Tatars, 186
Normans, policy towards Byzantium, 143; war, 148

Odoacer, 26
Oriental character of New Empire, 193
Ostrogoths, the, 25
Oumour, 207

Pachymeres, quoted, 196
Paleologi, wars of the, 185
Paphlagonians, the, 161
Patriarchs, power of the, 191
Paulicians, the sect of, 68
Peloponnese, the, 188
Persia, the kingdom of, 19
,, wars with, 38, 42
Petcheneges, the destruction of the, 133
Peter, Bulgarian emperor, 125
Phocas, 47
Photius, head of Greek Church, 81
,, his schism and fall, 87
Pirates, Arab, 95
Polyeucte, Patriarch, 98
Provinces, settlement of barbarians in, 17
,, system of government, 101

www.dacoromanica.ro

Rhomais, the, 192
Roger of Sicily, 153
Russians, wars with the, 107

Saint Conon, the monks of, 15
Saracens, rise of the, 54
,, navy defeated, 116
Schism, the great, 141
Servia, revolt of, 22
,, growing power of, 202
Simeon, King of Bulgaria, 91
Skylitzes, chronicle of, 113
Slavonic civilisation, dawn of a new, 81
Soliman, 136
Superstitions in Constantinople, 159
Sventislav, 185
Sviatoslav, 108
Syria, end of Roman dominion in, 57

Taginæ, battle of, 29
Theodatus, 27
Theodore I., emperor of Nicea, 180
Theophilus, Emperor, 79
Thessalonica, capture of, 102
Thomas claims empire, 78
Thrace, Turks from European state in, 213
Tiberius, Emperor, 42
Totilas, King of Goths, 29
Towns, life in provincial, 16
Trebizond, empire of, 193, 226
Tricameron, defeat of Vandals at, 24
Turks, appearance in Persia, 126
,, renewed attacks, 194
,, auxiliaries of Byzantine parties, 209
,, form military colony in Europe, 212
,, capture Constantinople, 224
Tzachas, Emperor at Smyrna, 136
Tzimiskes, 106

Vandals, the, 22
Varegs, the, 87
Vaspourakhan, 111, 127
Visigoths, the, 25
Vitiges, 28
Velboujd, battle of, 201
Venice, trade with Byzantium. 140
,, quarrels with, 167
Vlachs, the, 113, 164, 197

Xeni, Empress, 156

Yarmouk, Arab victory of the, 56

Zaccaria, the, 211
Zoë, Empress, 121

www.dacorobiblio.ro

COLSTON AND COMPANY LIMITED, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH

www.dacoromanica.ro